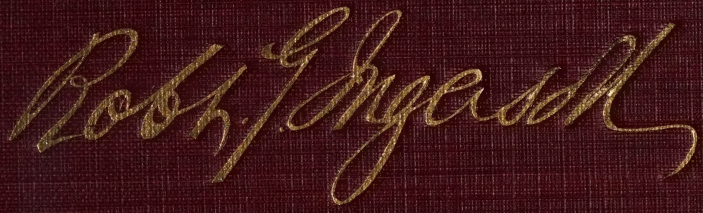

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THE WORKS

OF

ROBERT G. INGERSOLL.

New Dresden Edition.

Give me the storm and tempest of thought and action, rather than the dead calm of ignorance and faith. Banish me from Eden when you will; but first let me eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge.

IN TWELVE VOLUMES.

VOLUME THREE.

LECTURES.

C. P. FARRELL.

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SHAKESPEARE.

SHAKESPEARE.

I.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE was the greatest genius of our world. He left to us the richest legacy of all the dead—the treasures of the rarest soul that ever lived and loved and wrought of words the statues, pictures, robes and gems of thought.

It is hard to overstate the debt we owe to the men and women of genius. Take from our world what they have given, and all the niches would be empty, all the walls naked—meaning and connection would fall from words of poetry and fiction, music would go back to common air, and all the forms of subtle and enchanting Art would lose pro-

portion and become the unmeaning waste and shattered spoil of thoughtless Chance.

Shakespeare is too great a theme. I feel as though endeavoring to grasp a globe so large that the hand obtains no hold. He who would worthily speak of the great dramatist should be inspired by "a muse of fire that should ascend the brightest heaven of invention" — he should have "a kingdom for a stage, and monarchs to behold the swelling scene."

More than three centuries ago, the most intellectual of the human race was born. He was not of supernatural origin. At his birth there were no celestial pyrotechnics. His father and mother were both English, and both had the cheerful habit of living in this world. The cradle in which he was rocked was canopied by neither myth nor miracle, and in his veins there was no drop of royal blood.

This babe became the wonder of mankind. Neither of his parents could read or write. He grew up in a small and ignorant village on the banks of the Avon, in the midst of the common people of three hundred years ago. There was nothing in the peaceful, quiet landscape on which he looked, noth-

ing in the low hills, the cultivated and undulating fields, and nothing in the murmuring stream, to excite the imagination — nothing, so far as we can see, calculated to sow the seeds of the subtlest and sublimest thought.

So there is nothing connected with his education, or his lack of education, that in any way accounts for what he did. It is supposed that he attended school in his native town — but of this we are not certain. Many have tried to show that he was, after all, of gentle blood, but the fact seems to be the other way. Some of his biographers have sought to do him honor by showing that he was patronized by Queen Elizabeth, but of this there is not the slightest proof.

As a matter of fact, there never sat on any throne a king, queen, or emperor who could have honored William Shakespeare.

Ignorant people are apt to overrate the value of what is called education. The sons of the poor, having suffered the privations of poverty, think of wealth as the mother of joy. On the other hand, the children of the rich, finding that gold does not produce happiness, are apt to underrate the value of wealth. So the children of the educated often care

but little for books, and hold all culture in contempt. The children of great authors do not, as a rule, become writers.

Nature is filled with tendencies and obstructions. Extremes beget limitations, even as a river by its own swiftness creates obstructions for itself.

Possibly, many generations of culture breed a desire for the rude joys of savagery, and possibly generations of ignorance breed such a longing for knowledge, that of this desire, of this hunger of the brain, Genius is born. It may be that the mind, by lying fallow, by remaining idle for generations, gathers strength.

Shakespeare's father seems to have been an ordinary man of his time and class. About the only thing we know of him is that he was officially reported for not coming monthly to church. This is good as far as it goes. We can hardly blame him, because at that time Richard Bifield was the minister at Stratford, and an extreme Puritan, one who read the Psalter by Sternhold and Hopkins.

The church was at one time Catholic, but in John Shakespeare's day it was Puritan, and in 1564, the year of Shakespeare's birth, they had the images defaced. It is greatly to the honor of John

Shakespeare that he refused to listen to the "tidings of great joy" as delivered by the Puritan Bifield.

Nothing is known of his mother, except her beautiful name — Mary Arden. In those days but little attention was given to the biographies of women. They were born, married, had children, and died. No matter how celebrated their sons became, the mothers were forgotten. In old times, when a man achieved distinction, great pains were taken to find out about the father and grandfather — the idea being that genius is inherited from the father's side. The truth is, that all great men have had great mothers. Great women have had, as a rule, great fathers.

The mother of Shakespeare was, without doubt, one of the greatest of women. She dowered her son with passion and imagination and the higher qualities of the soul, beyond all other men. It has been said that a man of genius should select his ancestors with great care — and yet there does not seem to be as much in heredity as most people think. The children of the great are often small. Pigmies are born in palaces, while over the children of genius is the roof of straw. Most of the great are like

mountains, with the valley of ancestors on one side and the depression of posterity on the other.

In his day Shakespeare was of no particular importance. It may be that his mother had some marvelous and prophetic dreams, but Stratford was unconscious of the immortal child. He was never engaged in a reputable business. Socially he occupied a position below servants. The law described him as "a sturdy vagabond." He was neither a noble, a soldier, nor a priest. Among the half-civilized people of England, he who amused and instructed them was regarded as a menial. Kings had their clowns, the people their actors and musicians. Shakespeare was scheduled as a servant. It is thus that successful stupidity has always treated genius. Mozart was patronized by an Archbishop—lived in the palace,—but was compelled to eat with the scullions.

The composer of divine melodies was not fit to sit by the side of the theologian, who long ago would have been forgotten but for the fame of the composer.

We know but little of the personal peculiarities, of the daily life, or of what may be called the outward Shakespeare, and it may be fortunate that so little is

known. He might have been belittled by friendly fools. What silly stories, what idiotic personal reminiscences, would have been remembered by those who scarcely saw him! We have his best—his sublimest—and we have probably lost only the trivial and the worthless. All that is known can be written on a page.

We are tolerably certain of the date of his birth, of his marriage and of his death. We think he went to London in 1586, when he was twenty-two years old. We think that three years afterward he was part owner of Blackfriars' Theatre. We have a few signatures, some of which are supposed to be genuine. We know that he bought some land—that he had two or three law-suits. We know the names of his children. We also know that this incomparable man—so apart from, and so familiar with, all the world—lived during his literary life in London—that he was an actor, dramatist and manager—that he returned to Stratford, the place of his birth,—that he gave his writings to negligence, deserted the children of his brain—that he died on the anniversary of his birth at the age of fifty-two, and that he was buried in the church where the images had been defaced, and that on his

tomb was chiseled a rude, absurd and ignorant epitaph.

No letter of his to any human being has been found, and no line written by him can be shown.

And here let me give my explanation of the epitaph. Shakespeare was an actor—a disreputable business—but he made money—always reputable. He came back from London a rich man. He bought land, and built houses. Some of the supposed great probably treated him with deference. When he died he was buried in the church. Then came a reaction. The pious thought the church had been profaned. They did not feel that the ashes of an actor were fit to lie in holy ground. The people began to say the body ought to be removed. Then it was, as I believe, that Dr. John Hall, Shakespeare's son-in-law, had this epitaph cut on the tomb:

> "Good friend, for Jesus' sake forbeare
> To digg the dust enclosed heare:
> Blest be ye man yt spares thes stones,
> And curst be he yt moves my bones."

Certainly Shakespeare could have had no fear that his tomb would be violated. How could it have entered his mind to have put a warning, a threat and a blessing, upon his grave? But the ignorant peo-

ple of that day were no doubt convinced that the epitaph was the voice of the dead, and so feeling they feared to invade the tomb. In this way the dust was left in peace.

This epitaph gave me great trouble for years. It puzzled me to explain why he, who erected the intellectual pyramids, — great ranges of mountains — should put such a pebble at his tomb. But when I stood beside the grave and read the ignorant words, the explanation I have given flashed upon me.

II.

IT has been said that Shakespeare was hardly mentioned by his contemporaries, and that he was substantially unknown. This is a mistake. In 1600 a book was published called *England's Parnassus*, and it contained ninety extracts from Shakespeare. In the same year was published the *Garden of the Muses*, containing several pieces from Shakespeare, Chapman, Marston and Ben Jonson. *England's Helicon* was printed in the same year, and contained poems from Spenser, Greene, Harvey and Shakespeare.

In 1600 a play was acted at Cambridge, in which

Shakespeare was alluded to as follows : " Why, here's our fellow Shakespeare who puts them all down." John Weaver published a book of poems in 1595, in which there was a sonnet to Shakespeare. In 1598 Richard Bamfield wrote a poem to Shakespeare. Francis Meres, " clergyman, master of arts in both universities, compiler of school books," was the author of the *Wits' Treasury*. In this he compares the ancient and modern tragic poets, and mentions Marlowe, Peele, Kyd and Shakespeare. So he compares the writers of comedies, and mentions Lilly, Lodge, Greene and Shakespeare. He speaks of elegiac poets, and names Surrey, Wyatt, Sidney, Raleigh and Shakespeare. He compares the lyric poets, and names Spenser, Drayton, Shakespeare and others. This same writer, speaking of Horace, says that England has Sidney, Shakespeare and others, and that "as the soul of Euphorbus was thought to live in Pythagoras, so the sweet-wittie soul of Ovid lives in the mellifluous and honey-tongued Shakespeare." He also says : "If the Muses could speak English, they would speak in Shakespeare's phrase." This was in 1598. In 1607, John Davies alludes in a poem to Shakespeare.

Of course we are all familiar with what rare Ben Jonson wrote. Henry Chettle took Shakespeare to task because he wrote nothing on the death of Queen Elizabeth.

It may be wonderful that he was not better known. But is it not wonderful that he gained the reputation that he did in so short a time, and that twelve years after he began to write he stood at least with the first?

III.

BUT there is a wonderful fact connected with the writings of Shakespeare: In the Plays there is no direct mention of any of his contemporaries. We do not know of any poet, author, soldier, sailor, statesman, priest, nobleman, king, or queen, that Shakespeare directly mentioned.

Is it not marvelous that he, living in an age of great deeds, of adventures in far-off lands and unknown seas—in a time of religious wars—in the days of the Armada—the massacre of St. Bartholomew—the Edict of Nantes—the assassination of Henry III.—the victory of Lepanto—the execution of Marie Stuart—did not mention the name of any

man or woman of his time? Some have insisted that the paragraph ending with the lines:

"The imperial votress passed on in maiden meditation fancy free,"

referred to Queen Elizabeth; but it is impossible for me to believe that the daubed and wrinkled face, the small black eyes, the cruel nose, the thin lips, the bad teeth, and the red wig of Queen Elizabeth could by any possibility have inspired these marvelous lines.

It is perfectly apparent from Shakespeare's writings that he knew but little of the nobility, little of kings and queens. He gives to these supposed great people great thoughts, and puts great words in their mouths and makes them speak—not as they really did—but as Shakespeare thought such people should. This demonstrates that he did not know them personally.

Some have insisted that Shakespeare mentions Queen Elizabeth in the last scene of Henry VIII. The answer to this is that Shakespeare did not write the last scene in that Play. The probability is that Fletcher was the author.

Shakespeare lived during the great awakening of

the world, when Europe emerged from the darkness of the Middle Ages, when the discovery of America had made England, that blossom of the Gulf-Stream, the centre of commerce, and during a period when some of the greatest writers, thinkers, soldiers and discoverers were produced.

Cervantes was born in 1547, dying on the same day that Shakespeare died. He was undoubtedly the greatest writer that Spain has produced. Rubens was born in 1577. Camoens, the Portuguese, the author of the *Lusiad*, died in 1597. Giordano Bruno—greatest of martyrs—was born in 1548—visited London in Shakespeare's time—delivered lectures at Oxford, and called that institution "the widow of learning." Drake circled the globe in 1580. Galileo was born in 1564—the same year with Shakespeare. Michael Angelo died in 1563. Kepler—he of the Three Laws—born in 1571. Calderon, the Spanish dramatist, born in 1601. Corneille, the French poet, in 1606. Rembrandt, greatest of painters, 1607. Shakespeare was born in 1564. In that year John Calvin died. What a glorious exchange!

Seventy-two years after the discovery of America Shakespeare was born, and England was filled with

the voyages and discoveries written by Hakluyt, and the wonders that had been seen by Raleigh, by Drake, by Frobisher and Hawkins. London had become the centre of the world, and representatives from all known countries were in the new metropolis. The world had been doubled. The imagination had been touched and kindled by discovery. In the far horizon were unknown lands, strange shores beyond untraversed seas. Toward every part of the world were turned the prows of adventure. All these things fanned the imagination into flame, and this had its effect upon the literary and dramatic world. And yet Shakespeare — the master spirit of mankind — in the midst of these discoveries, of these adventures, mentioned no navigator, no general, no discoverer, no philosopher.

Galileo was reading the open volume of the sky, but Shakespeare did not mention him. This to me is the most marvelous thing connected with this most marvelous man.

At that time England was prosperous — was then laying the foundation of her future greatness and power.

When men are prosperous, they are in love with life. Nature grows beautiful, the arts begin to

flourish, there is work for painter and sculptor, the poet is born, the stage is erected — and this life with which men are in love, is represented in a thousand forms.

Nature, or Fate, or Chance prepared a stage for Shakespeare, and Shakespeare prepared a stage for Nature.

Famine and faith go together. In disaster and want the gaze of man is fixed upon another world. He that eats a crust has a creed. Hunger falls upon its knees, and heaven, looked for through tears, is the mirage of misery. But prosperity brings joy and wealth and leisure — and the beautiful is born.

One of the effects of the world's awakening was Shakespeare. We account for this man as we do for the highest mountain, the greatest river, the most perfect gem. We can only say: He was.

> "It hath been taught us from the primal state
> That he which is was wished until he were."

IV.

IN Shakespeare's time the actor was a vagabond, the dramatist a disreputable person — and yet the greatest dramas were then written. In spite of law, and social ostracism, Shakespeare reared the many-

colored dome that fills and glorifies the intellectual heavens.

Now the whole civilized world believes in the theatre — asks for some great dramatist — is hungry for a play worthy of the century, is anxious to give gold and fame to any one who can worthily put our age upon the stage — and yet no great play has been written since Shakespeare died.

Shakespeare pursued the highway of the right. He did not seek to put his characters in a position where it was right to do wrong. He was sound and healthy to the centre. It never occurred to him to write a play in which a wife's lover should be jealous of her husband.

There was in his blood the courage of his thought. He was true to himself and enjoyed the perfect freedom of the highest art. He did not write according to rules — but smaller men make rules from what he wrote.

How fortunate that Shakespeare was not educated at Oxford — that the winged god within him never knelt to the professor. How fortunate that this giant was not captured, tied and tethered by the literary Liliputians of his time.

He was an idealist. He did not — like most

writers of our time — take refuge in the real, hiding a lack of genius behind a pretended love of truth. All realities are not poetic, or dramatic, or even worth knowing. The real sustains the same relation to the ideal that a stone does to a statue — or that paint does to a painting. Realism degrades and impoverishes. In no event can a realist be more than an imitator and copyist. According to the realist's philosophy, the wax that receives and retains an image is an artist.

Shakespeare did not rely on the stage-carpenter, or the scenic painter. He put his scenery in his lines. There you will find mountains and rivers and seas, valleys and cliffs, violets and clouds, and over all "the firmament fretted with golden fire." He cared little for plot, little for surprise. He did not rely on stage effects, or red fire. The plays grow before your eyes, and they come as the morning comes. Plot surprises but once. There must be something in a play besides surprise. Plot in an author is a kind of strategy — that is to say, a sort of cunning, and cunning does not belong to the highest natures.

There is in Shakespeare such a wealth of thought that the plot becomes almost immaterial — and such

is this wealth that you can hardly know the play — there is too much. After you have heard it again and again, it seems as pathless as an untrodden forest.

He belonged to all lands. "Timon of Athens" is as Greek as any tragedy of Eschylus. "Julius Cæsar" and "Coriolanus" are perfect Roman, and as you read, the mighty ruins rise and the Eternal City once again becomes the mistress of the world. No play is more Egyptian than "Antony and Cleopatra"— the Nile runs through it, the shadows of the pyramids fall upon it, and from its scenes the Sphinx gazes forever on the outstretched sands.

In "Lear" is the true pagan spirit. "Romeo and Juliet" is Italian — everything is sudden, love bursts into immediate flower, and in every scene is the climate of the land of poetry and passion.

The reason of this is that Shakespeare dealt with elemental things, with universal man. He knew that locality colors without changing, and that in all surroundings the human heart is substantially the same.

Not all the poetry written before his time would make his sum — not all that has been written since, added to all that was written before, would equal his.

There was nothing within the range of human thought, within the horizon of intellectual effort, that he did not touch. He knew the brain and heart of man — the theories, customs, superstitions, hopes, fears, hatreds, vices and virtues of the human race.

He knew the thrills and ecstasies of love, the savage joys of hatred and revenge. He heard the hiss of envy's snakes and watched the eagles of ambition soar. There was no hope that did not put its star above his head — no fear he had not felt — no joy that had not shed its sunshine on his face. He experienced the emotions of mankind. He was the intellectual spendthrift of the world. He gave with the generosity, the extravagance, of madness.

Read one play, and you are impressed with the idea that the wealth of the brain of a god has been exhausted — that there are no more comparisons, no more passions to be expressed, no more definitions, no more philosophy, beauty, or sublimity to be put in words — and yet, the next play opens as fresh as the dewy gates of another day.

The outstretched wings of his imagination filled the sky. He was the intellectual crown o' the earth.

V.

THE plays of Shakespeare show so much knowledge, thought and learning, that many people — those who imagine that universities furnish capacity — contend that Bacon must have been the author.

We know Bacon. We know that he was a scheming politician, a courtier, a time-server of church and king, and a corrupt judge. We know that he never admitted the truth of the Copernican system — that he was doubtful whether instruments were of any advantage in scientific investigation — that he was ignorant of the higher branches of mathematics, and that, as a matter of fact, he added but little to the knowledge of the world. When he was more than sixty years of age he turned his attention to poetry, and dedicated his verses to George Herbert.

If you will read these verses you will say that the author of "Lear" and "Hamlet" did not write them.

Bacon dedicated his work on the *Advancement of Learning, Divine and Human*, to James I., and in his dedication he stated that there had not been, since the time of Christ, any king or monarch so learned in all erudition, divine or human. He placed James the First before Marcus Aurelius and

all other kings and emperors since Christ, and concluded by saying that James the First had "the power and fortune of a king, the illumination of a priest, the learning and universality of a philosopher." This was written of James the First, described by Macaulay as a "stammering, slobbering, trembling coward, whose writings were deformed by the grossest and vilest superstitions — witches being the special objects of his fear, his hatred, and his persecution."

It seems to have been taken for granted that if Shakespeare was not the author of the great dramas, Lord Bacon must have been.

It has been claimed that Bacon was the greatest philosopher of his time. And yet in reading his works we find that there was in his mind a strange mingling of foolishness and philosophy. He takes pains to tell us, and to write it down for the benefit of posterity, that "snow is colder than water, because it hath more spirit in it, and that quicksilver is the coldest of all metals, because it is the fullest of spirit."

He stated that he hardly believed that you could contract air by putting opium on top of the weather glass, and gave the following reason :

"I conceive that opium and the like make spirits fly rather by malignity than by cold."

This great philosopher gave the following recipe for staunching blood:

"Thrust the part that bleedeth into the body of a capon, new ripped and bleeding. This will staunch the blood. The blood, as it seemeth, sucking and drawing up by similitude of substance the blood it meeteth with, and so itself going back."

The philosopher also records this important fact:

"Divers witches among heathen and Christians have fed upon man's flesh to aid, as it seemeth, their imagination with high and foul vapors."

Lord Bacon was not only a philosopher, but he was a biologist, as appears from the following:

"As for living creatures, it is certain that their vital spirits are a substance compounded of an airy and flamy matter, and although air and flame being free will not mingle, yet bound in by a body that hath some fixing, will."

Now and then the inventor of deduction reasons by analogy. He says:

"As snow and ice holpen, and their cold activated by nitre or salt, will turn water into ice, so it may be it will turn wood or stiff clay into stone."

Bacon seems to have been a believer in the transmutation of metals, and solemnly gives a formula for changing silver or copper into gold. He also believed in the transmutation of plants, and had arrived at such a height in entomology that he informed the world that "insects have no blood."

It is claimed that he was a great observer, and as evidence of this he recorded the wonderful fact that "tobacco cut and dried by the fire loses weight;" that "bears in the winter wax fat in sleep, though they eat nothing;" that "tortoises have no bones;" that "there is a kind of stone, if ground and put in water where cattle drink, the cows will give more milk;" that "it is hard to cure a hurt in a Frenchman's head, but easy in his leg; that it is hard to cure a hurt in an Englishman's leg, but easy in his head;" that "wounds made with brass weapons are easier to cure than those made with iron;" that "lead will multiply and increase, as in statues buried in the ground;" and that "the rainbow touching anything causeth a sweet smell."

Bacon seems also to have turned his attention to ornithology, and says that "eggs laid in the full of the moon breed better birds," and that "you can make swallows white by putting ointment on the eggs before they are hatched."

He also informs us "that witches cannot hurt kings as easily as they can common people;" that "perfumes dry and strengthen the brain;" that "any one in the moment of triumph can be injured by another who casts an envious eye, and the injury is greatest when the envious glance comes from the oblique eye."

Lord Bacon also turned his attention to medicine, and he states that "bracelets made of snakes are good for curing cramps;" that "the skin of a wolf might cure the colic, because a wolf has great digestion;" that "eating the roasted brains of hens and hares strengthens the memory;" that "if a woman about to become a mother eats a good many quinces and considerable coriander seed, the child will be ingenious," and that "the moss which groweth on the skull of an unburied dead man is good for staunching blood."

He expresses doubt, however, "as to whether you can cure a wound by putting ointment on the weapon that caused the wound, instead of on the wound itself."

It is claimed by the advocates of the Baconian theory that their hero stood at the top of science; and yet "it is absolutely certain that he was ignorant

of the law of the acceleration of falling bodies, although the law had been made known and printed by Galileo thirty years before Bacon wrote upon the subject. Neither did this great man understand the principle of the lever. He was not acquainted with the precession of the equinoxes, and as a matter of fact was ill-read in those branches of learning in which, in his time, the most rapid progress had been made."

After Kepler discovered his third law, which was on the 15th of May, 1618, Bacon was more than ever opposed to the Copernican system. This great man was far behind his own time, not only in astronomy, but in mathematics. In the preface to the "Descriptio Globi Intellectualis," it is admitted either that Bacon had never heard of the correction of the parallax, or was unable to understand it. He complained on account of the want of some method for shortening mathematical calculations; and yet "Napier's Logarithms" had been printed nine years before the date of his complaint.

He attempted to form a table of specific gravities by a rude process of his own, a process that no one has ever followed; and he did this in spite of the fact that a far better method existed.

We have the right to compare what Bacon wrote with what it is claimed Shakespeare produced. I call attention to one thing — to Bacon's opinion of human love. It is this :

"The stage is more beholding to love than the life of man. As to the stage, love is ever matter of comedies and now and then of tragedies, but in life it doth much mischief — sometimes like a siren, sometimes like a fury. Amongst all the great and worthy persons there is not one that hath been transported to the mad degree of love, which shows that great spirits and great business do keep out this weak passion."

The author of "Romeo and Juliet" never wrote that.

It seems certain that the author of the wondrous Plays was one of the noblest of men.

Let us see what sense of honor Bacon had.

In writing commentaries on certain passages of Scripture, Lord Bacon tells a courtier, who has committed some offence, how to get back into the graces of his prince or king. Among other things he tells him not to appear too cheerful, but to assume a very grave and modest face ; not to bring the matter up himself ; to be extremely industrious, so that the

prince will see that it is hard to get along without him; also to get his friends to tell the prince or king how badly he, the courtier, feels; and then he says, all these failing, "let him contrive to transfer the fault to others."

It is true that we know but little of Shakespeare, and consequently do not positively know that he did not have the ability to write the Plays — but we do know Bacon, and we know that he could not have written these Plays — consequently, they must have been written by a comparatively unknown man — that is to say, by a man who was known by no other writings. The fact that we do not know Shakespeare, except through the Plays and Sonnets, makes it possible for us to believe that he was the author.

Some people have imagined that the Plays were written by several — but this only increases the wonder, and adds a useless burden to credulity.

Bacon published in his time all the writings that he claimed. Naturally, he would have claimed his best. Is it possible that Bacon left the wondrous children of his brain on the door-step of Shakespeare, and kept the deformed ones at home? Is it possible that he fathered the failures and deserted the perfect?

Of course, it is wonderful that so little has been found touching Shakespeare — but is it not equally wonderful, if Bacon was the author, that not a line has been found in all his papers, containing a suggestion, or a hint, that he was the writer of these Plays? Is it not wonderful that no fragment of any scene — no line — no word — has been found?

Some have insisted that Bacon kept the authorship secret because it was disgraceful to write Plays. This argument does not cover the Sonnets — and besides, one who had been stripped of the robes of office for receiving bribes as a judge, could have borne the additional disgrace of having written "Hamlet." The fact that Bacon did not claim to be the author, demonstrates that he was not. Shakespeare claimed to be the author, and no one in his time or day denied the claim. This demonstrates that he was.

Bacon published his works, and said to the world: This is what I have done.

Suppose you found in a cemetery a monument erected to John Smith, inventor of the Smith-churn, and suppose you were told that Mr. Smith provided for the monument in his will, and dictated the inscription — would it be possible to convince you

that Mr. Smith was also the inventor of the locomotive and telegraph?

Bacon's best can be compared with Shakespeare's common, but Shakespeare's best rises above Bacon's best, like a domed temple above a beggar's hut.

VI.

OF course it is admitted that there were many dramatists before and during the time of Shakespeare—but they were only the foot hills of that mighty peak the top of which the clouds and mists still hide. Chapman and Marlowe, Heywood and Jonson, Webster, Beaumont and Fletcher wrote some great lines, and in the monotony of declamation now and then is found a strain of genuine music—but all of them together constituted only a herald of Shakespeare. In all these Plays there is but a hint, a prophecy, of the great drama destined to revolutionize the poetic thought of the world.

Shakespeare was the greatest of poets. What Greece and Rome produced was great until his time. "Lions make leopards tame."

The great poet is a great artist. He is painter and sculptor. The greatest pictures and statues

have been painted and chiseled with words. They outlast all others. All the galleries of the world are poor and cheap compared with the statues and pictures in Shakespeare's book.

Language is made of pictures represented by sounds. The outer world is a dictionary of the mind, and the artist called the soul uses this dictionary of things to express what happens in the noiseless and invisible world of thought. First a sound represents something in the outer world, and afterwards something in the inner, and this sound at last is represented by a mark, and this mark stands for a picture, and every brain is a gallery, and the artists — that is to say, the souls — exchange pictures and statues.

All art is of the same parentage. The poet uses words — makes pictures and statues of sounds. The sculptor expresses harmony, proportion, passion, in marble; the composer, in music; the painter in form and color. The dramatist expresses himself not only in words, not only paints these pictures, but he expresses his thought in action.

Shakespeare was not only a poet, but a dramatist, and expressed the ideal, the poetic, not only in words, but in action. There are the wit, the humor, the

pathos, the tragedy of situation, of relation. The dramatist speaks and acts through others — his personality is lost. The poet lives in the world of thought and feeling, and to this the dramatist adds the world of action. He creates characters that seem to act in accordance with their own natures and independently of him. He compresses lives into hours, tells us the secrets of the heart, shows us the springs of action — how desire bribes the judgment and corrupts the will — how weak the reason is when passion pleads, and how grand it is to stand for right against the world.

It is not enough to say fine things, — great things, dramatic things, must be done.

Let me give you an illustration of dramatic incident accompanying the highest form of poetic expression :

Macbeth having returned from the murder of Duncan says to his wife :

"Methought I heard a voice cry : Sleep no more,
Macbeth does murder sleep ; the innocent sleep ;
Sleep, that knits up the ravelled sleeve of care,
The death of each day's life, sore labor's bath,
Balm of hurt minds, great Nature's second course,
Chief nourisher in life's feast." * * *

"Still it cried: Sleep no more, to all the house,
Glamis hath murdered sleep, and therefore Cawdor
Shall sleep no more — Macbeth shall sleep no more."

She exclaims:

"Who was it that thus cried?
Why, worthy Thane, you do unbend your noble strength
To think so brain-sickly of things; get some water,
And wash this filthy witness from your hand.
Why did you bring the daggers from the place?"

Macbeth was so overcome with horror at his own deed, that he not only mistook his thoughts for the words of others, but was so carried away and beyond himself that he brought with him the daggers — the evidence of his guilt — the daggers that he should have left with the dead. This is dramatic.

In the same play, the difference of feeling before and after the commission of a crime is illustrated to perfection. When Macbeth is on his way to assassinate the king, the bell strikes, and he says, or whispers:

"Hear it not, Duncan, for it is a knell."

Afterward, when the deed has been committed, and a knocking is heard at the gate, he cries:

"Wake Duncan with thy knocking. I would thou couldst."

Let me give one more instance of dramatic action. When Antony speaks above the body of Cæsar he says :

"You all do know this mantle : I remember
The first time ever Cæsar put it on—
'Twas on a summer's evening, in his tent,
That day he overcame the Nervii :
Look ! In this place ran Cassius' dagger through :
See what a rent the envious Casca made !
Through this the well-beloved Brutus stabbed,
And as he plucked his cursed steel away,
Mark how the blood of Cæsar followed it."

VII.

THERE are men, and many of them, who are always trying to show that somebody else chiseled the statue or painted the picture, — that the poem is attributed to the wrong man, and that the battle was really won by a subordinate.

Of course Shakespeare made use of the work of others — and, we might almost say, of all others. Every writer must use the work of others. The only question is, how the accomplishments of other minds are used, whether as a foundation to build higher, or whether stolen to the end that the thief may make a

reputation for himself, without adding to the great structure of literature.

Thousands of people have stolen stones from the Coliseum to make huts for themselves. So thousands of writers have taken the thoughts of others with which to adorn themselves. These are plagiarists. But the man who takes the thought of another, adds to it, gives it intensity and poetic form, throb and life, — is in the highest sense original.

Shakespeare found nearly all of his facts in the writings of others, and was indebted to others for most of the stories of his plays. The question is not: Who furnished the stone, or who owned the quarry, but who chiseled the statue?

We now know all the books that Shakespeare could have read, and consequently know many of the sources of his information. We find in Pliny's *Natural History*, published in 1601, the following: "The sea Pontis evermore floweth and runneth out into the Propontis; but the sea never retireth back again with the Impontis." This was the raw material, and out of it Shakespeare made the following:

"Like to the Pontic Sea,
Whose icy current and compulsive course
Ne'er feels retiring ebb, but keeps due on

To the Propontic and the Hellespont——
Even so my bloody thoughts, with violent pace,
Shall ne'er turn back, ne'er ebb to humble love,
Till that a capable and wide revenge
Swallow them up."

Perhaps we can give an idea of the difference between Shakespeare and other poets, by a passage from "Lear." When Cordelia places her hand upon her father's head and speaks of the night and of the storm, an ordinary poet might have said:

"On such a night, a dog
Should have stood against my fire."

A very great poet might have gone a step further and exclaimed:

"On such a night, mine enemy's dog
Should have stood against my fire."

But Shakespeare said:

"Mine enemy's dog, though he had bit me,
Should have stood, that night, against my fire."

Of all the poets — of all the writers — Shakespeare is the most original. He is as original as Nature.

It may truthfully be said that "Nature wants stuff to vie strange forms with fancy, to make another."

VIII.

THERE is in the greatest poetry a kind of extravagance that touches the infinite, and in this Shakespeare exceeds all others.

You will remember the description given of the voyage of Paris in search of Helen :

"The seas and winds, old wranglers, made a truce,
And did him service ; he touched the ports desired,
And for an old aunt, whom the Greeks held captive,
He brought a Grecian queen whose youth and freshness
Wrinkles Apollo, and makes stale the morning."

So, in Pericles, when the father finds his daughter, he cries out :

"O Helicanus ! strike me, honored sir ;
Give me a gash, put me to present pain,
Lest this great sea of joys, rushing upon me,
O'erbear the shores of my mortality."

The greatest compliment that man has ever paid to the woman he adores is this line :

"Eyes that do mislead the morn."

Nothing can be conceived more perfectly poetic.

In that marvelous play, the "Midsummer Night's Dream," is one of the most extravagant things in literature :

"Thou rememberest
Since once I sat upon a promontory,
And heard a mermaid on a dolphin's back
Uttering such dulcet and harmonious breath
That the rude sea grew civil at her song,
And certain stars shot madly from their spheres
To hear the sea-maid's music."

This is so marvelously told that it almost seems probable.

So the description of Mark Antony:

"For his bounty
There was no winter in't — an autumn t'was
That grew the more by reaping. His delights
Were dolphin-like — they showed his back above
The element they lived in."

Think of the astronomical scope and amplitude of this:

"Her bed is India—there she lies a pearl."

Is there anything more intense than these words of Cleopatra?

"Rather on Nilus mud lay me stark naked
And let the water-flies blow me into abhorring."

Or this of Isabella:

"The impression of keen whips I'd wear as rubies,
And strip myself to death as to a bed
That longing I've been sick for, ere I yield
My body up to shame."

Is there an intellectual man in the world who will not agree with this?

> "Let me not live
> After my flame lacks oil, to be the snuff
> Of younger spirits."

Can anything exceed the words of Troilus when parting with Cressida:

> "We two, that with so many thousand sighs
> Did buy each other, must poorly sell ourselves
> With the rude brevity and discharge of one.
> Injurious time now with a robber's haste
> Crams his rich thievery up, he knows not how;
> As many farewells as be stars in heaven,
> With distinct breath and consigned kisses to them,
> He fumbles up into a loose adieu,
> And scants us with a single famished kiss,
> Distasted with the salt of broken tears."

Take this example, where pathos almost touches the grotesque.

> "O dear Juliet, why art thou yet so fair?
> Shall I believe that unsubstantial death is amorous,
> And that the lean, abhorred monster keeps thee here
> I' the dark, to be his paramour?"

Often when reading the marvelous lines of Shakespeare, I feel that his thoughts are "too subtle potent, tuned too sharp in sweetness, for the capacity of my

ruder powers." Sometimes I cry out, "O churl! — write all, and leave no thoughts for those who follow after."

IX.

SHAKESPEARE was an innovator, an iconoclast. He cared nothing for the authority of men or of schools. He violated the "unities," and cared nothing for the models of the ancient world.

The Greeks insisted that nothing should be in a play that did not tend to the catastrophe. They did not believe in the episode — in the sudden contrasts of light and shade — in mingling the comic and the tragic. The sunlight never fell upon their tears, and darkness did not overtake their laughter. They believed that nature sympathized or was in harmony with the events of the play. When crime was about to be committed — some horror to be perpetrated — the light grew dim, the wind sighed, the trees shivered, and upon all was the shadow of the coming event.

Shakespeare knew that the play had little to do with the tides and currents of universal life — that Nature cares neither for smiles nor tears, for life nor

death, and that the sun shines as gladly on coffins as on cradles.

The first time I visited the Place de la Concorde, where during the French Revolution stood the guillotine, and where now stands an Egyptian obelisk — a bird, sitting on the top, was singing with all its might. — Nature forgets.

One of the most notable instances of the violation by Shakespeare of the classic model, is found in the 6th scene of the I. Act of Macbeth.

When the King and Banquo approach the castle in which the King is to be murdered that night, no shadow falls athwart the threshold. So beautiful is the scene that the King says :

> "This castle hath a pleasant seat ; the air
> Nimbly and sweetly recommends itself
> Unto our gentle senses."

And Banquo adds :

> "This guest of summer,
> The temple-haunting martlet, does approve
> By his loved mansionry that the heaven's breath
> Smells wooingly here ; no jutty, frieze,
> Buttress, nor coign of vantage, but this bird
> Hath made his pendent bed and procreant cradle,
> Where they most breed and haunt, I have observed
> The air is delicate."

Another notable instance is the porter scene immediately following the murder. So, too, the dialogue with the clown who brings the asp to Cleopatra just before the suicide, illustrates my meaning.

I know of one paragraph in the Greek drama worthy of Shakespeare. This is in "Medea." When Medea kills her children she curses Jason, using the ordinary Billingsgate and papal curse, but at the conclusion says: "I pray the gods to make him virtuous, that he may the more deeply feel the pang that I inflict."

Shakespeare dealt in lights and shadows. He was intense. He put noons and midnights side by side. No other dramatist would have dreamed of adding to the pathos — of increasing our appreciation of Lear's agony, by supplementing the wail of the mad king with the mocking laughter of a loving clown.

X.

THE ordinary dramatists — the men of talent — (and there is the same difference between talent and genius that there is between a stone-mason and a sculptor) create characters that become types. Types are of necessity caricatures — actual men and women are to some extent contradictory in their

actions. Types are blown in the one direction by the one wind—characters have pilots.

In real people, good and evil mingle. Types are all one way, or all the other—all good, or all bad, all wise, or all foolish.

Pecksniff was a perfect type, a perfect hypocrite—and will remain a type as long as language lives—a hypocrite that even drunkenness could not change. Everybody understands Pecksniff, and compared with him Tartuffe was an honest man.

Hamlet is an individual, a person, an actual being—and for that reason there is a difference of opinion as to his motives and as to his character. We differ about Hamlet as we do about Cæsar, or about Shakespeare himself.

Hamlet saw the ghost of his father and heard again his father's voice, and yet, afterward, he speaks of "the undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveler returns."

In this there is no contradiction. The reason outweighs the senses. If we should see a dead man rise from his grave, we would not, the next day, believe that we did. No one can credit a miracle until it becomes so common that it ceases to be miraculous.

Types are puppets — controlled from without — characters act from within. There is the same difference between characters and types that there is between springs and water-works, between canals and rivers, between wooden soldiers and heroes.

In most plays and in most novels the characters are so shadowy that we have to piece them out with the imagination.

One waking in the morning sometimes sees at the foot of his bed a strange figure — it may be of an ancient lady with cap and ruffles and with the expression of garrulous and fussy old age — but when the light gets stronger, the figure gradually changes and he sees a few clothes on a chair.

The dramatist lives the lives of others, and in order to delineate character must not only have imagination but sympathy with the character delineated. The great dramatist thinks of a character as an entirety, as an individual.

I once had a dream, and in this dream I was discussing a subject with another man. It occurred to me that I was dreaming, and I then said to myself: If this is a dream, I am doing the talking for both sides — consequently I ought to know in advance what the other man is going to say. In my dream I

tried the experiment. I then asked the other man a question, and before he answered made up my mind what the answer was to be. To my surprise, the man did not say what I expected he would, and so great was my astonishment that I awoke.

It then occurred to me that I had discovered the secret of Shakespeare. He did, when awake, what I did when asleep — that is, he threw off a character so perfect that it acted independently of him.

In the delineation of character Shakespeare has no rivals. He creates no monsters. His characters do not act without reason, without motive.

Iago had his reasons. In Caliban, nature was not destroyed—and Lady Macbeth certifies that the woman still was in her heart, by saying :

"Had he not resembled my father as he slept, I had done it."

Shakespeare's characters act from within. They are centres of energy. They are not pushed by unseen hands, or pulled by unseen strings. They have objects, desires. They are persons—real, living beings.

Few dramatists succeed in getting their characters loose from the canvas—their backs stick to the wall —they do not have free and independent action—

they have no background, no unexpressed motives —no untold desires. They lack the complexity of the real.

Shakespeare makes the character true to itself. Christopher Sly, surrounded by the luxuries of a lord, true to his station, calls for a pot of the smallest ale.

Take one expression by Lady Macbeth. You remember that after the murder is discovered—after the alarm bell is rung—she appears upon the scene wanting to know what has happened. Macduff refuses to tell her, saying that the slightest word would murder as it fell. At this moment Banquo comes upon the scene and Macduff cries out to him:

"Our royal master's murdered."

What does Lady Macbeth then say? She in fact makes a confession of guilt. The weak point in the terrible tragedy is that Duncan was murdered in Macbeth's castle. So when Lady Macbeth hears what they suppose is news to her, she cries:

"What! In our house!"

Had she been innocent, her horror of the crime would have made her forget the place—the venue. Banquo sees through this, and sees through her.

Her expression was a light, by which he saw her guilt—and he answers :

"Too cruel anywhere."

No matter whether Shakespeare delineated clown or king, warrior or maiden—no matter whether his characters are taken from the gutter or the throne—each is a work of consummate art, and when he is unnatural, he is so splendid that the defect is forgotten.

When Romeo is told of the death of Juliet, and thereupon makes up his mind to die upon her grave, he gives a description of the shop where poison could be purchased. He goes into particulars and tells of the alligators stuffed, of the skins of ill-shaped fishes, of the beggarly account of empty boxes, of the remnants of pack-thread, and old cakes of roses—and while it is hardly possible to believe that under such circumstances a man would take the trouble to make an inventory of a strange kind of drug-store, yet the inventory is so perfect—the picture is so marvelously drawn—that we forget to think whether it is natural or not.

In making the frame of a great picture—of a great scene—Shakespeare was often careless, but the

picture is perfect. In making the sides of the arch he was negligent, but when he placed the keystone, it burst into blossom. Of course there are many lines in Shakespeare that never should have been written. In other words, there are imperfections in his plays. But we must remember that Shakespeare furnished the torch that enables us to see these imperfections.

Shakespeare speaks through his characters, and we must not mistake what the characters say, for the opinion of Shakespeare. No one can believe that Shakespeare regarded life as "a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing." That was the opinion of a murderer, surrounded by avengers, and whose wife—partner in his crimes—troubled with thick-coming fancies—had gone down to her death.

Most actors and writers seem to suppose that the lines called "The Seven Ages" contain Shakespeare's view of human life. Nothing could be further from the truth. The lines were uttered by a cynic, in contempt and scorn of the human race.

Shakespeare did not put his characters in the livery and uniform of some weakness, peculiarity or passion. He did not use names as tags or brands. He

did not write under the picture, "This is a villain." His characters need no suggestive names to tell us what they are — we see them and we know them for ourselves.

It may be that in the greatest utterances of the greatest characters in the supreme moments, we have the real thoughts, opinions and convictions of Shakespeare.

Of all writers Shakespeare is the most impersonal. He speaks through others, and the others seem to speak for themselves. The didactic is lost in the dramatic. He does not use the stage as a pulpit to enforce some maxim. He is as reticent as Nature.

He idealizes the common and transfigures all he touches — but he does not preach. He was interested in men and things as they were. He did not seek to change them — but to portray. He was Nature's mirror — and in that mirror Nature saw herself.

When I stood amid the great trees of California that lift their spreading capitals against the clouds, looking like Nature's columns to support the sky, I thought of the poetry of Shakespeare.

XI.

WHAT a procession of men and women—statesmen and warriors—kings and clowns—issued from Shakespeare's brain! What women!

Isabella—in whose spotless life love and reason blended into perfect truth.

Juliet—within whose heart passion and purity met like white and red within the bosom of a rose.

Cordelia—who chose to suffer loss, rather than show her wealth of love with those who gilded lies in hope of gain.

Hermione—"tender as infancy and grace"—who bore with perfect hope and faith the cross of shame, and who at last forgave with all her heart.

Desdemona—so innocent, so perfect, her love so pure, that she was incapable of suspecting that another could suspect, and who with dying words sought to hide her lover's crime—and with her last faint breath uttered a loving lie that burst into a perfumed lily between her pallid lips.

Perdita—"a violet dim, and sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes"—"The sweetest low-born lass that ever ran on the green sward." And

Helena—who said:

"I know I love in vain, strive against hope—
Yet in this captious and intenable sieve
I still pour in the waters of my love,
And lack not to lose still,
Thus, Indian-like,
Religious in mine error, I adore
The sun that looks upon his worshiper,
But knows of him no more."

Miranda—who told her love as gladly as a flower gives its bosom to the kisses of the sun. And

Cordelia—whose kisses cured and whose tears restored. And stainless

Imogen—who cried: "What is it to be false?"

And here is the description of the perfect woman:

"To feed for aye her lamp and flames of love;
To keep her constancy in plight and youth—
Outliving beauty's outward with a mind
That doth renew swifter than blood decays."

Shakespeare has done more for woman than all the other dramatists of the world.

For my part, I love the Clowns. I love *Launce* and his dog Crabb, and *Gobbo*, whose conscience threw its arms around the neck of his heart, and *Touchstone*, with his lie seven times removed; and dear old *Dogberry*—a pretty piece of flesh, tedious as a king. And *Bottom*, the very paramour for a

sweet voice, longing to take the part to tear a cat in; and *Autolycus*, the snapper-up of unconsidered trifles, sleeping out the thought for the life to come. And great *Sir John*, without conscience, and for that reason unblamed and enjoyed — and who at the end babbles of green fields, and is almost loved. And ancient *Pistol*, the world his oyster. And *Bardolph*, with the flea on his blazing nose, putting beholders in mind of a damned soul in hell. And the poor *Fool*, who followed the mad king, and went "to bed at noon." And the clown who carried the worm of Nilus, whose "biting was immortal." And *Corin*, the shepherd — who described the perfect man: "I am a true laborer: I earn that I eat — get that I wear — owe no man aught — envy no man's happiness — glad of other men's good — content."

And mingling in this motley throng, *Lear*, within whose brain a tempest raged until the depths were stirred, and the intellectual wealth of a life was given back to memory — and then by madness thrown to storm and night — and when I read the living lines I feel as though I looked upon the sea and saw it wrought by frenzied whirlwinds, until the buried treasures and the sunken wrecks of all the years were cast upon the shores.

And *Othello* — who like the base Indian threw a pearl away richer than all his tribe.

And *Hamlet* — thought-entangled — hesitating between two worlds.

And *Macbeth* — strange mingling of cruelty and conscience, reaping the sure harvest of successful crime — "Curses not loud but deep — mouth-honor — breath."

And *Brutus*, falling on his sword that Cæsar might be still.

And *Romeo*, dreaming of the white wonder of Juliet's hand. And *Ferdinand*, the patient log-man for Miranda's sake. And *Florizel*, who, "for all the sun sees, or the close earth wombs, or the profound seas hide," would not be faithless to the low-born lass. And *Constance*, weeping for her son, while grief "stuffs out his vacant garments with his form."

And in the midst of tragedies and tears, of love and laughter and crime, we hear the voice of the good friar, who declares that in every human heart, as in the smallest flower, there are encamped the opposed hosts of good and evil — and our philosophy is interrupted by the garrulous old nurse, whose talk is as busily useless as the babble of a stream that hurries by a ruined mill.

From every side the characters crowd upon us — the men and women born of Shakespeare's brain. They utter with a thousand voices the thoughts of the "myriad-minded" man, and impress themselves upon us as deeply and vividly as though they really lived with us.

Shakespeare alone has delineated love in every possible phase—has ascended to the very top, and actually reached heights that no other has imagined. I do not believe the human mind will ever produce or be in a position to appreciate, a greater love-play than "Romeo and Juliet." It is a symphony in which all music seems to blend. The heart bursts into blossom, and he who reads feels the swooning intoxication of a divine perfume.

In the alembic of Shakespeare's brain the baser metals were turned to gold—passions became virtues—weeds became exotics from some diviner land—and common mortals made of ordinary clay outranked the Olympian Gods. In his brain there was the touch of chaos that suggests the infinite—that belongs to genius. Talent is measured and mathematical—dominated by prudence and the thought of use. Genius is tropical. The creative instinct runs riot, delights in extravagance and

waste, and overwhelms the mental beggars of the world with uncounted gold and unnumbered gems.

Some things are immortal: The plays of Shakespeare, the marbles of the Greeks, and the music of Wagner.

XII.

SHAKESPEARE was the greatest of philosophers. He knew the conditions of success — of happiness — the relations that men sustain to each other, and the duties of all. He knew the tides and currents of the heart — the cliffs and caverns of the brain. He knew the weakness of the will, the sophistry of desire — and

> "That pleasure and revenge have ears more deaf than adders to the voice of any true decision."

He knew that the soul lives in an invisible world — that flesh is but a mask, and that

> "There is no art to find the mind's construction
> In the face."

He knew that courage should be the servant of judgment, and that

"When valor preys on reason it eats the sword
It fights with."

He knew that man is never master of the event, that he is to some extent the sport or prey of the blind forces of the world, and that

"In the reproof of chance lies the true proof of men."

Feeling that the past is unchangeable, and that that which must happen is as much beyond control as though it had happened, he says:

"Let determined things to destiny
Hold unbewailed their way."

Shakespeare was great enough to know that every human being prefers happiness to misery, and that crimes are but mistakes. Looking in pity upon the human race, upon the pain and poverty, the crimes and cruelties, the limping travelers on the thorny paths, he was great and good enough to say:

"There is no darkness but ignorance."

In all the philosophies there is no greater line. This great truth fills the heart with pity.

He knew that place and power do not give happiness — that the crowned are subject as the lowest to fate and chance.

"For within the hollow crown,
That rounds the mortal temples of a king,
Keeps death his court ; and there the antick sits,
Scoffing his state, and grinning at his pomp ;
Allowing him a breath, a little scene
To monarchize, be fear'd, and kill with looks ;
Infusing him with self and vain conceit,—
As if this flesh, which walls about our life,
Were brass impregnable ; and, humour'd thus,
Comes at the last, and with a little pin
Bores through his castle wall, and—farewell king !"

So, too, he knew that gold could not bring joy — that death and misfortune come alike to rich and poor, because :

"If thou art rich thou art poor ;
For like an ass whose back with ingots bows
Thou bearest thy heavy riches but a journey,
And death unloads thee."

In some of his philosophy there was a kind of scorn — a hidden meaning that could not in his day and time have safely been expressed. You will remember that Laertes was about to kill the king, and this king was the murderer of his own brother, and sat upon the throne by reason of his crime — and in the mouth of such a king Shakespeare puts these words :

"There's such divinity doth hedge a king."

So, in Macbeth :

"How he solicits Heaven himself best knows ; but strangely visited people
All swollen and ulcerous, pitiful to the eye,
The mere despairs of surgery, he cures ;
Hanging a golden stamp about their necks,
Put on with holy prayers ; and 'tis spoken
To the succeeding royalty — he leaves
The healing benediction. With this strange virtue
He hath a heavenly gift of prophecy,
And sundry blessings hang about his throne,
That speak him full of grace."

Shakespeare was the master of the human heart — knew all the hopes, fears, ambitions and passions that sway the mind of man ; and thus knowing, he declared that

"Love is not love that alters
When it alteration finds."

This is the sublimest declaration in the literature of the world.

Shakespeare seems to give the generalization — the result — without the process of thought. He seems always to be at the conclusion — standing where all truths meet.

In one of the Sonnets is this fragment of a line that contains the highest possible truth :

"Conscience is born of love."

If man were incapable of suffering, the words right and wrong never could have been spoken. If man were destitute of imagination, the flower of pity never could have blossomed in his heart.

We suffer—we cause others to suffer—those that we love—and of this fact conscience is born.

Love is the many-colored flame that makes the fireside of the heart. It is the mingled spring and autumn—the perfect climate of the soul.

XIII.

IN the realm of comparison Shakespeare seems to have exhausted the relations, parallels and similitudes of things, He only could have said:

"Tedious as a twice-told tale
Vexing the ears of a drowsy man."

"Duller than a great thaw.
Dry as the remainder biscuit after a voyage."

In the words of Ulysses, spoken to Achilles, we find the most wonderful collection of pictures and comparisons ever compressed within the same number of lines:

"Time hath, my lord, a wallet at his back,
Wherein he puts alms for oblivion,—
A great-sized monster of ingratitudes—
Those scraps are good deeds past; which are devoured
As fast as they are made, forgot as soon
As done; perseverance, dear my lord,
Keeps honor bright: to have done is to hang
Quite out of fashion, like a rusty mail
In monumental mockery. Take the instant way;
For honor travels in a strait so narrow
Where one but goes abreast; keep then the path;
For emulation hath a thousand sons
That one by one pursue; if you give way,
Or hedge aside from the direct forthright,
Like to an entered tide, they all rush by
And leave you hindmost:
Or, like a gallant horse fallen in first rank,
Lie there for pavement to the abject rear,
O'errun and trampled on: then what they do in present,
Tho' less than yours in past, must o'ertop yours;
For time is like a fashionable host
That slightly shakes his parting guest by the hand,
And with his arms outstretched as he would fly,
Grasps in the comer: Welcome ever smiles,
And Farewell goes out sighing."

So the words of Cleopatra, when Charmain speaks:

"Peace, peace:
Dost thou not see my baby at my breast
That sucks the nurse asleep?"

XIV.

NOTHING is more difficult than a definition — a crystallization of thought so perfect that it emits light. Shakespeare says of suicide :

"It is great to do that thing
That ends all other deeds,
Which shackles accident, and bolts up change."

He defines drama to be :

"Turning the accomplishments of many years
Into an hour glass."

Of death :

"This sensible warm motion to become a kneaded clod,
To lie in cold obstruction and to rot."

Of memory :

"The warder of the brain."

Of the body :

"This muddy vesture of decay."

And he declares that

"Our little life is rounded with a sleep."

He speaks of Echo as :

"The babbling gossip of the air" —

Romeo, addressing the poison that he is about to take, says :

"Come, bitter conduct, come unsavory guide,
Thou desperate pilot, now at once run on
The dashing rocks thy sea-sick, weary bark."

He describes the world as

"This bank and shoal of time."

He says of rumor —

"That it doubles, like the voice and echo."

It would take days to call attention to the perfect definitions, comparisons and generalizations of Shakespeare. He gave us the deeper meanings of our words — taught us the art of speech. He was the lord of language — master of expression and compression.

He put the greatest thoughts into the shortest words — made the poor rich and the common royal.

Production enriched his brain. Nothing exhausted him. The moment his attention was called to any subject — comparisons, definitions, metaphors and generalizations filled his mind and begged for utterance. His thoughts like bees robbed every blossom in the world, and then with "merry march" brought the rich booty home "to the tent royal of their emperor."

Shakespeare was the confidant of Nature. To him she opened her "infinite book of secrecy," and in his brain were "the hatch and brood of time."

XV.

THERE is in Shakespeare the mingling of laughter and tears, humor and pathos. Humor is the rose, wit the thorn. Wit is a crystallization, humor an efflorescence. Wit comes from the brain, humor from the heart. Wit is the lightning of the soul.

In Shakespeare's nature was the climate of humor. He saw and felt the sunny side even of the saddest things. You have seen sunshine and rain at once. So Shakespeare's tears fell oft upon his smiles. In moments of peril — on the very darkness of death — there comes a touch of humor that falls like a fleck of sunshine.

Gonzalo, when the ship is about to sink, having seen the boatswain, exclaims :

> "I have great comfort from this fellow;
> Methinks he hath no drowning mark upon him;
> His complexion is perfect gallows."

Shakespeare is filled with the strange contrasts of grief and laughter. While poor Hero is supposed to be dead — wrapped in the shroud of dishonor — Dogberry and Verges unconsciously put again the wedding wreath upon her pure brow.

The soliloquy of Launcelot — great as Hamlet's — offsets the bitter and burning words of Shylock.

There is only time to speak of Maria in "Twelfth Night," of Autolycus in the "Winter's Tale," of the parallel drawn by Fluellen between Alexander of Macedon and Harry of Monmouth, or of the marvelous humor of Falstaff, who never had the faintest thought of right or wrong — or of Mercutio, that embodiment of wit and humor — or of the gravediggers who lamented that "great folk should have countenance in this world to drown and hang themselves, more than their even Christian," and who reached the generalization that "the gallows does well because it does well to those who do ill."

There is also an example of grim humor — an example without a parallel in literature, so far as I know. Hamlet having killed Polonius is asked:

> "Where's Polonius?"
> "At supper."
> "At supper! where?"
> "Not where he eats, but where he is eaten."

Above all others, Shakespeare appreciated the pathos of situation.

Nothing is more pathetic than the last scene in "Lear." No one has ever bent above his dead who did not feel the words uttered by the mad king, — words born of a despair deeper than tears:

"Oh, that a horse, a dog, a rat hath life
And thou no breath!"

So Iago, after he has been wounded, says:

"I bleed, sir; but not killed."

And Othello answers from the wreck and shattered remnant of his life:

"I would have thee live;
For in my sense it is happiness to die."

When Troilus finds Cressida has been false, he cries:

"Let it not be believed for womanhood;
Think! we had mothers."

Ophelia, in her madness, "the sweet bells jangled out o' tune," says softly:

"I would give you some violets;
But they withered all when my father died."

When Macbeth has reaped the harvest, the seeds of which were sown by his murderous hand, he exclaims,— and what could be more pitiful?

"I 'gin to be aweary of the sun."

Richard the Second feels how small a thing it is to be, or to have been, a king, or to receive honors

before or after power is lost; and so, of those who stood uncovered before him, he asks this piteous question:

"I live with bread, like you; feel want,
Taste grief, need friends; subjected thus,
How can you say to me I am a king?"

Think of the salutation of Antony to the dead Cæsar:

"Pardon me, thou piece of bleeding earth."

When Pisanio informs Imogen that he had been ordered by Posthumus to murder her, she bares her neck and cries:

"The lamb entreats the butcher:
Where is thy knife? Thou art too slow
To do thy master's bidding when I desire it."

Antony, as the last drops are falling from his self-inflicted wound, utters with his dying breath to Cleopatra, this:

"I here importune death awhile, until
Of many thousand kisses the poor last
I lay upon thy lips."

To me, the last words of Hamlet are full of pathos:

"I die, Horatio.
The potent poison quite o'er crows my spirit * * *
The rest is silence."

XVI.

SOME have insisted that Shakespeare must have been a physician, for the reason that he shows such knowledge of Medicine—of the symptoms of disease and death—was so familiar with the brain, and with insanity in all its forms.

I do not think he was a physician. He knew too much—his generalizations were too splendid. He had none of the prejudices of that profession in his time. We might as well say that he was a musician, a composer, because we find in "The Two Gentlemen of Verona" nearly every musical term known in Shakespeare's time.

Others maintain that he was a lawyer, perfectly acquainted with the forms, with the expressions familiar to that profession — yet there is nothing to show that he was a lawyer, or that he knew more about law than any intelligent man should know.

He was not a lawyer. His sense of justice was never dulled by reading English law.

Some think that he was a botanist, because he named nearly all known plants. Others, that he was an astronomer, a naturalist, because he gave hints and suggestions of nearly all discoveries.

Some have thought that he must have been a sailor, for the reason that the orders given in the opening of "The Tempest" were the best that could, under the circumstances, have been given to save the ship.

For my part, I think there is nothing in the plays to show that he was a lawyer, doctor, botanist or scientist. He had the observant eyes that really see, the ears that really hear, the brain that retains all pictures, all thoughts, logic as unerring as light, the imagination that supplies defects and builds the perfect from a fragment. And these faculties, these aptitudes, working together, account for what he did.

He exceeded all the sons of men in the splendor of his imagination. To him the whole world paid tribute, and nature poured her treasures at his feet. In him all races lived again, and even those to be were pictured in his brain.

He was a man of imagination — that is to say, of genius, and having seen a leaf, and a drop of water, he could construct the forests, the rivers, and the seas — and in his presence all the cataracts would fall and foam, the mists rise, the clouds form and float.

If Shakespeare knew one fact, he knew its kindred and its neighbors. Looking at a coat of mail, he instantly imagined the society, the conditions, that produced it and what it, in turn, produced. He saw the castle, the moat, the draw-bridge, the lady in the tower, and the knightly lover spurring across the plain. He saw the bold baron and the rude retainer, the trampled serf, and all the glory and the grief of feudal life.

He lived the life of all.

He was a citizen of Athens in the days of Pericles. He listened to the eager eloquence of the great orators, and sat upon the cliffs, and with the tragic poet heard "the multitudinous laughter of the sea." He saw Socrates thrust the spear of question through the shield and heart of falsehood. He was present when the great man drank hemlock, and met the night of death, tranquil as a star meets morning. He listened to the peripatetic philosophers, and was unpuzzled by the sophists. He watched Phidias as he chiseled shapeless stone to forms of love and awe.

He lived by the mysterious Nile, amid the vast and monstrous. He knew the very thought that wrought the form and features of the Sphinx. He

heard great Memnon's morning song when marble lips were smitten by the sun. He laid him down with the embalmed and waiting dead, and felt within their dust the expectation of another life, mingled with cold and suffocating doubts — the children born of long delay.

He walked the ways of mighty Rome, and saw great Cæsar with his legions in the field. He stood with vast and motley throngs and watched the triumphs given to victorious men, followed by uncrowned kings, the captured hosts, and all the spoils of ruthless war. He heard the shout that shook the Coliseum's roofless walls, when from the reeling gladiator's hand the short sword fell, while from his bosom gushed the stream of wasted life.

He lived the life of savage men. He trod the forests' silent depths, and in the desperate game of life or death he matched his thought against the instinct of the beast.

He knew all crimes and all regrets, all virtues and their rich rewards. He was victim and victor, pursuer and pursued, outcast and king. He heard the applause and curses of the world, and on his heart had fallen all the nights and noons of failure and success.

He knew the unspoken thoughts, the dumb desires, the wants and ways of beasts. He felt the crouching tiger's thrill, the terror of the ambushed prey, and with the eagles he had shared the ecstasy of flight and poise and swoop, and he had lain with sluggish serpents on the barren rocks uncoiling slowly in the heat of noon.

He sat beneath the bo-tree's contemplative shade, wrapped in Buddha's mighty thought, and dreamed all dreams that light, the alchemist, has wrought from dust and dew, and stored within the slumbrous poppy's subtle blood.

He knelt with awe and dread at every shrine — he offered every sacrifice, and every prayer — felt the consolation and the shuddering fear — mocked and worshiped all the gods — enjoyed all heavens and felt the pangs of every hell.

He lived all lives, and through his blood and brain there crept the shadow and the chill of every death, and his soul, like Mazeppa, was lashed naked to the wild horse of every fear and love and hate.

The Imagination had a stage in Shakespeare's brain, whereon were set all scenes that lie between the morn of laughter and the night of tears, and where his players bodied forth the false and true, the

joys and griefs, the careless shallows and the tragic deeps of universal life.

From Shakespeare's brain there poured a Niagara of gems spanned by Fancy's seven-hued arch. He was as many-sided as clouds are many-formed. To him giving was hoarding — sowing was harvest — and waste itself the source of wealth. Within his marvelous mind were the fruits of all thought past, the seeds of all to be. As a drop of dew contains the image of the earth and sky, so all there is of life was mirrored forth in Shakespeare's brain.

Shakespeare was an intellectual ocean, whose waves touched all the shores of thought; within which were all the tides and waves of destiny and will; over which swept all the storms of fate, ambition and revenge; upon which fell the gloom and darkness of despair and death and all the sunlight of content and love, and within which was the inverted sky lit with the eternal stars — an intellectual ocean — towards which all rivers ran, and from which now the isles and continents of thought receive their dew and rain.

ROBERT BURNS.

ROBERT BURNS.*

WE have met to-night to honor the memory of a poet—possibly the next to the greatest that has ever written in our language. I would place one above him, and only one—Shakespeare.

It may be well enough at the beginning to inquire, What is a poet? What is poetry?

Every one has some idea of the poetic, and this idea is born of his experience—of his education—of his surroundings.

There have been more nations than poets.

Many people suppose that poetry is a kind of art depending upon certain rules, and that it is only necessary to find out these rules to be a poet. But these rules have never been found. The great poet follows them unconsciously. The great poet seems as unconscious as Nature, and the product of the highest art seems to have been felt instead of thought.

The finest definition perhaps that has been given is this :

* This lecture is printed from notes found among Colonel Ingersoll's papers, but was not revised by him for publication.

"As nature unconsciously produces that which appears to be the result of consciousness, so the greatest artist consciously produces that which appears the unconscious result."

Poetry must rest on the experience of men—the history of heart and brain. It must sit by the fireside of the heart. It must have to do with this world, with the place in which we live, with the men and women we know, with their loves, their hopes, their fears and their joys.

After all, we care nothing about gods and goddesses, or folks with wings.

The cloud-compelling Jupiters, the ox-eyed Junos, the feather-heeled Mercurys, or the Minervas that leaped full-armed from the thick skull of some imaginary god, are nothing to us. We know nothing of their fears or loves, and for that reason, the poetry that deals with them, no matter how ingenious it may be, can never touch the human heart.

I was taught that Milton was a wonderful poet, and above all others sublime. I have read Milton once. Few have read him twice.

With splendid words, with magnificent mythological imagery, he musters the heavenly militia—puts epaulets on the shoulders of God, and describes the Devil as an artillery officer of the highest rank.

Then he describes the battles in which immortals undertake the impossible task of killing each other.

Take this line :

"Flying with indefatigable wings over the vast abrupt."

This is called sublime, but what does it mean?

We have been taught that Dante was a wonderful poet.

He described with infinite minuteness the pangs and agonies endured by the damned in the torture-dungeons of God.

The vicious twins of superstition—malignity and solemnity—struggle for the mastery in his revengeful lines.

But there was one good thing about Dante : he had the courage, and what might be called the religious democracy, to see a pope in hell.

That is something to be thankful for.

So, the sonnets of Petrarch are as unmeaning as the promises of candidates. They are filled not with genuine passion, but with the feelings that lovers are supposed to have.

Poetry cannot be written by rule ; it is not a trade, or a profession. Let the critics lay down the laws, and the true poet will violate them all.

By rule you can make skeletons, but you cannot

clothe them with flesh, put blood in their veins, thoughts in their eyes, and passions in their hearts.

This can be done only by following the impulses of the heart, the winged fancies of the brain—by wandering from paths and roads, keeping step with the rhythmic ebb and flow of the throbbing blood.

In the olden time in Scotland, most of the so-called poetry was written by pedagogues and parsons—gentlemen who found out what little they knew of the living world by reading the dead languages—by studying epitaphs in the cemeteries of literature.

They knew nothing of any life that they thought poetic. They kept as far from the common people as they could. They wrote countless verses, but no poems. They tried to put metaphysics, that is to say, Calvinism, in poetry.

As a matter of fact, a Calvinist cannot be a poet. Calvinism takes all the poetry out of the world.

If the existence of the Calvinistic, the Christian, hell could be demonstrated, another poem never could be written.

In those days they made poetry about geography, and the beauties of the Scotch Kirk, and even about law.

The critics have always been looking for mistakes,

not beauties—not for the perfection of expression and feeling. They would object to the lark and nightingale because they do not sing by note—to the clouds because they are not square.

At one time it was thought that scenery, the grand in nature, made the poet. We now know that the poet makes the scenery. Holland has produced far more genius than the Alps. Where nature is prodigal—where the crags tower above the clouds—man is overcome, or overawed. In England and Scotland the hills are low, and there is nothing in the scenery calculated to rouse poetic blood, and yet these countries have produced the greatest literature of all time.

The truth is that poets and heroes make the scenery. The place where man has died for man is grander than all the snow-crowned summits of the world.

A poem is something like a mountain stream that flashes in light, then lost in shadow, leaps with a kind of wild joy into the abyss, emerges victorious, and winding runs amid meadows, lingers in quiet places, holding within its breast the hills and vales and clouds—then running by the cottage door, babbling of joy, and murmuring delight, then sweeping on to join its old mother, the sea.

Thousands, millions of men live poems, but do not write them; but every great poem has been lived.

I say to-night that every good and self-denying man, every one who lives and labors for those he loves, for wife and child, is living a poem. The loving mother rocking a cradle, singing the slumber song, lives a poem pure and tender as the dawn; the man who bares his breast to shot and shell lives a poem, and all the great men of the world, and all the brave and loving women have been poets in action, whether they have written one word or not. The poor woman of the tenement, sewing, blinded by tears, lives a poem holier, it may be, than the fortunate can know. The pioneers—the home builders, the heroes of toil, are all poets, and their deeds are filled with the pathos and perfection of the highest art.

But to-night we are going to talk of a poet—one who poured out his soul in song. How does a country become great? By producing great poets. Why is it that Scotland, when the roll of nations is called, can stand up and proudly answer "here"? Because Robert Burns has lived. It is Robert Burns that put Scotland in the front rank.

On the 25th of January, 1759, Robert Burns was born. William Burns, a gardener, his father; Agnes

Brown, his mother. He was born near the little town of Ayr, in a little cottage made of mud and thatched with straw. From the first, poverty was his portion,—"Poverty, the half-sister of Death." The father struggled as best he could, but at last overcome more by misfortunes than by disease, died in 1784, at the age of 63. Robert attended school at Alloway Mill, and had been taught a little by John Murdock, and some by his father. That was his education—with this exception, that whenever nature produces a genius, the old mother holds him close to her heart and whispers secrets to his ears that others do not know.

He had spent most of his time working on a farm, raising very poor crops, getting deeper and deeper into debt, until finally the death of his father left him to struggle as best he might for himself.

In the year 1759, Scotland was emerging from the darkness and gloom of Calvinism. The attention of the people had been drawn from the other world, or rather from the other worlds, to the affairs of this. The commercial spirit, the interests of trade, were winning men from the discussion of predestination and the sacred decrees of God. Mechanics and manufacturers were undermining theology. The influence of the clergy was gradually diminishing, and

the beggarly elements of this life were beginning to attract the attention of the Scotch. The people at that time were mostly poor. They had made but little progress in art and science. They had been engaged for many years fighting for their political or theological rights, or to destroy the rights of others. They had great energy, great natural sense, and courage without limit, and it may be well enough to add that they were as obstinate as brave.

Several countries have had a metaphysical peasantry. It is true of parts of Switzerland about the time of Calvin. In Holland, after the people had suffered all the cruelties that Spain could inflict, they began to discuss as to foreordination and free will, and upon these questions destroyed each other. The same is true of New England, and peculiarly true of Scotland—a metaphysical peasantry—men who lived in mud houses thatched with straw and discussed the motives of God and the means by which the Infinite Being was to accomplish his ends.

For many years the Scotch had been ruled by the clergy. The power of the Scotch preacher was unlimited. It so happened that the religion of Scotland became synonymous with patriotism, and those who were fighting Scotland were also fight-

ing her religion. This drew priest and people together; and the priest naturally took advantage of the situation. They not only determined upon the policy to be pursued by the people, but they went into every detail of life. And in this world there has never been established a more odious tyranny or a more odious form of government than that of the Scotch Kirk.

A few men had made themselves famous—David Hume, Adam Smith, Doctor Hugh Blair, he of the grave, Beattie and Ramsay, Reid and Robertson—but the great body of the people were orthodox to the last drop of their blood. Nothing seemed to please them like attending church, like hearing sermons. Before Communion Sabbath they frequently met on Friday, having two or three sermons on that day, three or four on Saturday, more if possible on Sunday, and wound up with a kind of gospel spree on Monday. They loved it. I think it was Heinrich Heine who said, "It is not true, it is not true that the damned in hell are compelled to hear all the sermons preached on earth." He says this is not true. This shows that there is some mercy even in hell. They were infinitely interested in these questions.

And yet, the people were social, fond of games,

of outdoor sports, full of song and story, and no folks ever passed the cup with a happier smile.

Sometimes I have thought that they were saved from the gloom of Calvinism by the use of intoxicating liquors. It may be that John Barleycorn redeemed the Scotch and saved them from the divine dyspepsia of the Calvinistic creed. So, too, it may be that the Puritan was saved by rum, and the Hollander by schnapps. Yet, in spite of the gloom of the creed, in spite of the climate of mists and fogs, and the maniac winters, the songs of Scotland are the sweetest and the tenderest in all the world.

Robert Burns was a peasant—a ploughman—a poet. Why is it that millions and millions of men and women love this man? He was a Scotchman, and all the tendrils of his heart struck deep in Scotland's soil. He voiced the ideals of the best and greatest of his race and blood. And yet he is as dear to the citizens of this great Republic as to Scotia's sons and daughters.

All great poetry has a national flavor. It tastes of the soil. No matter how great it is, how wide, how universal, the flavor of locality is never lost. Burns made common life beautiful. He idealized the sun-burnt girls who worked in the fields. He put honest labor above titled idleness. He made a

cottage far more poetic than a palace. He painted the simple joys and ecstasies and raptures of sincere love. He put native sense above the polish of schools.

We love him because he was independent, sturdy, self-poised, social, generous, susceptible, thrilled by a look, by a touch, full of pity, carrying the sorrows of others in his heart, even those of animals; hating to see anybody suffer, and lamenting the death of everything—even of trees and flowers. We love him because he was a natural democrat, and hated tyranny in every form.

We love him because he was always on the side of the people, feeling the throb of progress.

Burns read but little, had but few books; had but a little of what is called education; had only an outline of history, a little of philosophy, in its highest sense. His library consisted of the *Life of Hannibal*, the *History of Wallace*, Ray's *Wisdom of God*, Stackhouse's *History of the Bible;* two or three plays of Shakespeare, Ferguson's *Scottish Poems*, Pope's *Homer*, Shenstone, McKenzie's *Man of Feeling* and Ossian.

Burns was a man of genius. He was like a spring—something that suggests no labor.

A spring seems to be a perpetual free gift of

nature. There is no thought of toil. The water comes whispering to the pebbles without effort. There is no machinery, no pipes, no pumps, no engines, no water-works, nothing that suggests expense or trouble. So a natural poet is, when compared with the educated, with the polished, with the industrious.

Burns seems to have done everything without effort. His poems wrote themselves. He was overflowing with sympathies, with suggestions, with ideas, in every possible direction. There is no midnight oil. There is nothing of the student—no suggestion of their having been re-written or re-cast. There is in his heart a poetic April and May, and all the poetic seeds burst into sudden life. In a moment the seed is a plant, and the plant is in blossom, and the fruit is given to the world.

He looks at everything from a natural point of view; and he writes of the men and women with whom he was acquainted. He cares nothing for mythology, nothing for the legends of the Greeks and Romans. He draws but little from history. Everything that he uses is within his reach, and he knows it from centre to circumference. All his figures and comparisons are perfectly natural. He does not endeavor to make angels of fine ladies.

He takes the servant girls with whom he is acquainted, the dairy maids that he knows. He puts wings upon them and makes the very angels envious.

And yet this man, so natural, keeping his cheek so close to the breast of nature, strangely enough thought that Pope and Churchill and Shenstone and Thomson and Lyttelton and Beattie were great poets.

His first poem was addressed to Nellie Kilpatrick, daughter of the blacksmith. He was in love with Ellison Begbie, offered her his heart and was refused. She was a servant, working in a family and living on the banks of the Cessnock. Jean Armour, his wife, was the daughter of a tailor, and Highland Mary, a servant—a milk-maid.

He did not make women of goddesses, but he made goddesses of women.

Poet of Love.

Burns was the poet of love. To him woman was divine. In the light of her eyes he stood transfigured. Love changed this peasant to a king; the plaid became a robe of purple; the ploughman became a poet; the poor laborer an inspired lover.

In his "Vision" his native Muse tells the story of his verse:

"When youthful Love, warm-blushing strong,
Keen-shivering shot thy nerves along,
Those accents, grateful to thy tongue,
Th' adorèd Name,
I taught thee how to pour in song,
To soothe thy flame.

"I saw thy pulse's maddening play,
Wild, send thee Pleasure's devious way,
Misled by Fancy's meteor ray,
By Passion driven;
But yet the light that led astray
Was light from Heaven."

Ah, this light from heaven: how it has purified the heart of man!

Was there ever a sweeter song than "Bonnie Doon"?

"Thou'lt break my heart thou bonnie bird
That sings beside thy mate,
For sae I sat and sae I sang,
And wist na o' my fate."

or,

"O, my luve's like a red, red rose
That's newly sprung in June;
O, my luve's like the melodie
That's sweetly play'd in tune."

It would consume days to give the intense and tender lines—lines wet with the heart's blood, lines that throb and sigh and weep, lines that glow like flames, lines that seem to clasp and kiss.

But the most perfect love-poem that I know—pure as the tear of gratitude—is "To Mary in Heaven:"

"Thou lingering star, with less'ning ray,
That lov'st to greet the early morn,
Again thou usher'st in the day
My Mary from my soul was torn.
O Mary! dear departed shade!
Where is thy place of blissful rest?
Seest thou thy lover lowly laid?
Hear'st thou the groans that rend his breast?

"That sacred hour can I forget?
Can I forget the hallow'd grove
Where, by the winding Ayr, we met,
To live one day of parting love?
Eternity will not efface
Those records dear of transports past;
Thy image at our last embrace;
Ah! little thought we 'twas our last!

"Ayr, gurgling, kiss'd his pebbled shore,
O'erhung with wild woods, thick'ning green;
The fragrant birch, and hawthorn hoar,
Twin'd am'rous round the raptur'd scene.
The flowers sprang wanton to be prest,
The birds sang love on ev'ry spray,
Till too, too soon, the glowing west
Proclaim'd the speed of wingèd day.

"Still o'er these scenes my mem'ry wakes,
And fondly broods with miser care!
Time but the impression stronger makes,
As streams their channels deeper wear.
My Mary, dear departed shade!
Where is thy blissful place of rest?
Seest thou thy lover lowly laid?
Hear'st thou the groans that rend his breast?"

Above all the daughters of luxury and wealth, above all of Scotland's queens rises this pure and gentle girl made deathless by the love of Robert Burns.

Poet of Home.

He was the poet of the home—of father, mother, child—of the purest wedded love.

In the "Cotter's Saturday Night," one of the noblest and sweetest poems in the literature of the world, is a description of the poor cotter going from his labor to his home:

"At length his lonely cot appears in view,
Beneath the shelter of an agèd tree;
Th' expectant wee-things, toddlin', stacher through
To meet their Dad, wi' flichterin' noise and glee.
His wee bit ingle, blinkin' bonnilie,
His clean hearth-stane, his thrifty wifie's smile,
The lisping infant prattling on his knee,
Does a' his weary carking cares beguile,
And makes him quite forget his labour an' his toil."

And in the same poem, after having described the courtship, Burns bursts into this perfect flower:

"O happy love! where love like this is found!
O heart-felt raptures! bliss beyond compare!
I've pacèd much this weary, mortal round,
And sage experience bids me this declare:
If Heaven a draught of heavenly pleasure spare
One cordial in this melancholy vale,
'Tis when a youthful, loving, modest pair,
In other's arms, breathe out the tender tale
Beneath the milk-white thorn that scents the ev'ning gale."

Is there in the world a more beautiful—a more touching picture than the old couple sitting by the ingleside with clasped hands, and the pure, patient, loving old wife saying to the white-haired man who won her heart when the world was young:

"John Anderson, my jo, John,
When we were first acquent;
Your locks were like the raven,
Your bonnie brow was brent;
But now your brow is beld, John,
Your locks are like the snaw;
But blessings on your frosty pow,
John Anderson, my jo.

"John Anderson, my jo, John,
We clamb the hill thegither;
And monie a canty day, John,
We've had wi' ane anither;
Now we maun totter down, John,
But hand in hand we'll go,
And sleep thegither at the foot,
John Anderson, my jo."

Burns taught that the love of wife and children was the highest—that to toil for them was the noblest.

"The sacred lowe o' weel placed love,
Luxuriantly indulge it;
But never tempt the illicit rove,
Though naething should divulge it.

"I waine the quantum of the sin,
The hazzard o'concealing;
But och! it hardens all within,
And petrifies the feeling."

"To make a happy fireside clime
To weans and wife,
That's the true pathos, and sublime,
Of human life."

Friendship.

He was the poet of friendship:

"Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And never brought to min'?
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And days o' auld lang syne?"

Wherever those who speak the English language assemble—wherever the Anglo-Saxon people meet with clasp and smile—these words are given to the air.

Scotch Drink.

The poet of good Scotch drink, of merry meetings, of the cup that cheers, author of the best drinking song in the world:

"O, Willie brew'd a peck o' maut,
And Rob and Allen came to see;
Three blyther hearts, that lee-lang night,
Ye wadna find in Christendie.

CHORUS.

"We are na fou, we're no that fou,
But just a drappie in our ee;
The cock may craw, the day may daw,
And aye we'll taste the barley bree.

"Here are we met, three merry boys,
Three merry boys, I trow, are we;
And monie a night we've merry been,
And monie mae we hope to be!
We are na fou, &c.

"It is the moon, I ken her horn,
That's blinkin in the lift say hie;
She shines sae bright to wyle us hame,
But by my sooth she'll wait a wee!
We are na fou, &c.

"Wha first shall rise to gang awa,
A cuckold, coward loun is he!
Wha last beside his chair shall fa',
He is the King amang us three!
We are na fou, &c."

POETS BORN, NOT MADE.

He did not think the poet could be made—that colleges could furnish feeling, capacity, genius. He gave his opinion of these manufactured minstrels:

"A set o' dull, conceited hashes,
Confuse their brains in college classes!
They gang in stirks, and come out asses,
Plain truth to speak;
An' syne they think to climb Parnassus
By dint o' Greek!"

"Gie me ane spark o' Nature's fire,
That's a' the learning I desire;
Then tho' I drudge thro' dub an' mire
At pleugh or cart,
My Muse, though hamely in attire,
May touch the heart."

Burns, The Artist.

He was an artist—a painter of pictures. This of the brook:

"Whyles owre a linn the burnie plays,
As thro' the glen it wimpl't;
Whyles round a rocky scaur it strays;
Whyles in a wiel it dimpl't;
Whyles glitter's to the nightly rays,
Wi' bickering, dancing dazzle;
Whyles cookit underneath the braes,
Below the spreading hazel,
Unseen that night."

Or this from Tam O'Shanter:

"But pleasures are like poppies spread,
You seize the flow'r, its bloom is shed,
Or, like the snow falls in the river,
A moment white—then melts forever;
Or, like the borealis race,
That flit ere you can point their place;
Or, like the rainbow's lovely form,
Evanishing amid the storm."

This:

"As in the bosom of the stream
The moon-beam dwells at dewy e'en;
So, trembling, pure, was tender love,
Within the breast o' bonnie Jean."

"The sun had clos'd the winter day,
The Curlers quat their roarin play,
An' hunger's Maukin ta'en her way
To kail-yards green,
While faithless snaws ilk step betray
Whare she had been."

"O, sweet are Coila's haughs an' woods,
When lintwhites chant amang the buds,
And jinkin' hares, in amorous whids,
Their loves enjoy,
While thro' the braes the cushat croons
Wi' wailfu' cry!"

"Ev'n winter bleak has charms to me
When winds rave thro' the naked tree;
Or frosts on hills of Ochiltree
Are hoary gray;
Or blinding drifts wild-furious flee,
Dark'ning the day!"

This of the lark and daisy—the daintiest and nearest perfect in our language:

"Alas! it's no' thy neebor sweet,
The bonnie Lark, companion meet!
Bending thee 'mang the dewy weet!
Wi' spreckl'd breast,
When upward-springing, blythe, to greet
The purpling east."

A Real Democrat.

He was in every fibre of his being a sincere democrat. He was a believer in the people—in the sacred rights of man. He believed that honest peasants were superior to titled parasites. He knew the so-called "gentry" of his time.

In one of his letters to Dr. Moore is this passage: "It takes a few dashes into the world to give the young great man that proper, decent, unnoticing disregard for the poor, insignificant, stupid devils—the mechanics and peasantry around him—who were born in the same village."

He knew the infinitely cruel spirit of caste—a spirit that despises the useful—the children of toil—those who bear the burdens of the world.

"If I'm design'd yon lordling's slave,
By nature's law design'd,
Why was an independent wish
E'er planted in my mind?
If not, why am I subject to
His cruelty, or scorn?
Or why has man the will and pow'r
To make his fellow mourn?"

Against the political injustice of his time—against the artificial distinctions among men by which the lowest were regarded as the highest—he protested in the great poem, "A man's a man for a' that," every line of which came like lava from his heart.

"Is there, for honest poverty,
That hangs his head, and a' that?
The coward-slave, we pass him by,
We dare be poor for a' that!
For a' that, and a' that,
Our toils obscure, and a' that;
The rank is but the guinea stamp;
The man's the gowd for a' that.

"What tho' on hamely fare we dine,
Wear hodden-gray, and a' that;
Gie fools their silks, and knaves their wine,
A man's a man for a' that.
For a' that, and a' that,
Their tinsel show, and a' that;
The honest man, tho' e'er sae poor,
Is king o' men for a' that.

"Ye see yon birkie, ca'd a lord,
Wha struts, and stares, and a' that;
Tho' hundreds worship at his word,
He's but a coof for a' that;
For a' that, and a' that,
His riband, star, and a' that,
The man' o' independent mind,
He looks and laughs at a' that.

"A prince can mak' a belted knight,
A marquis, duke, and a' that;
But an honest man's aboon his might,
Guid faith he mauna fa' that!
For a' that, and a' that,
Their dignities, and a' that,
The pith o' sense, and pride o' worth,
Are higher ranks than a' that.

"Then let us pray that come it may,
As come it will for a' that;
That sense and worth, o'er a' the earth,
May bear the gree and a' that.
For a' that, and a' that;
It's comin' yet for a' that
That man to man, the warld o'er,
Shall brithers be for a' that."

No grander declaration of independence was ever uttered. It stirs the blood like a declaration of war. It is the apotheosis of honesty, independence, sense and worth. And it is a prophecy of that better day when men will be brothers the world over.

His Theology.

Burns was superior in heart and brain to the theologians of his time. He knew that the creed of Calvin was infinitely cruel and absurd, and he attacked it with every weapon that his brain could forge.

He was not awed by the clergy, and he cared nothing for what was called "authority." He insisted on thinking for himself. Sometimes he faltered, and now and then, fearing that some friend might take offence, he would say or write a word in favor of the Bible, and sometimes he praised the Scriptures in words of scorn.

He laughed at the dogma of eternal pain—at hell as described by the preacher :

"A vast, unbottom'd, boundless pit,
Fill'd fou o' lowin' brunstane,
Wha's ragin' flame an' scorchin' heat
Wad melt the hardest whun-stane!
The half asleep start up wi' fear,
An' think they hear it roarin',
When presently it does appear,
'Twas but some neebor snorin',
Asleep that day."

The dear old doctrine that man is totally depraved, that morality is a snare—a flowery path leading to perdition—excited the indignation of Burns. He put the doctrine in verse :

" Morality, thou deadly bane,
Thy tens o' thousands thou hast slain !
Vain is his hope, whose stay and trust is
In moral mercy, truth and justice."

He understood the hypocrites of his day :

" Hypocrisy, in mercy spare it !
That holy robe, O dinna tear it !
Spare't for their sakes wha aften wear it,
The lads in black ;
But your curst wit, when it comes near it,
Rives 't aff their back."

" Then orthodoxy yet may prance,
And Learning in a woody dance,
And that fell cur ca'd Common Sense,
That bites sae sair,
Be banish'd owre the seas to France;
Let him bark there."

" They talk religion in their mouth ;
They talk o' mercy, grace, an' truth,
For what ? to gie their malice skouth
On some puir wight,
An' hunt him down, o'er right an' ruth,
To ruin straight."

"Doctor Mac, Doctor Mac,
Ye should stretch on a rack,
To strike evil doers wi' terror;
To join faith and sense
Upon any pretence,
Was heretic damnable error,
Doctor Mac,
Was heretic damnable error."

But the greatest, the sharpest, the deadliest, the keenest, the wittiest thing ever said or written against Calvinism is Holy Willie's Prayer:—

"O Thou, wha in the Heavens dost dwell,
Wha, as it pleases best thysel',
Sends ane to heaven and ten to hell,
A' for thy glory,
And no for onie guid or ill
They've done afore thee!

"I bless and praise thy matchless might,
When thousands thou has left in night,
That I am here afore thy sight
For gifts an' grace,
A burnin' an' a shinin' light,
To a' this place.

"What was I, or my generation,
That I should get sic exaltation?
I, wha deserve sic just damnation,
For broken laws,
Five thousand years 'fore my creation,
Thro' Adam's cause?

"When frae my mither's womb I fell,
Thou might hae plunged me into hell,
To gnash my gums, to weep and wail,
In burnin' lake,
Where damnèd devils roar and yell,
Chained to a stake.
"Yet I am here a chosen sample,
To show Thy grace is great and ample;
I'm here a pillar in Thy temple,
Strong as a rock,
A guide, a buckler, an example
To a' Thy flock."

In this poem you will find the creed stated just as it is—with fairness and accuracy—and at the same time stated so perfectly that its absurdity fills the mind with inextinguishable laughter.

In this poem Burns nailed Calvinism to the cross, put it on the rack, subjected it to every instrument of torture, flayed it alive, burned it at the stake, and scattered its ashes to the winds.

In 1787 Burns wrote this curious letter to Miss Chalmers:

"I have taken tooth and nail to the Bible, and have got through the five books of Moses and half way in Joshua.

"It is really a glorious book."

This must have been written in the spirit of Voltaire.

Think of Burns, with his loving, tender heart, half way in Joshua, standing in blood to his knees, surrounded by the mangled bodies of old men, women and babes, the swords of the victors dripping with innocent blood, shouting—"This is really a glorious sight."

A letter written on the seventh of March, 1788, contains the clearest, broadest and most philosophical statement of the religion of Burns to be found in his works:

"An honest man has nothing to fear. If we lie down in the grave, the whole man a piece of broken machinery, to moulder with the clods of the valley—be it so; at least there is an end of pain and care, woes and wants. If that part of us called Mind does survive the apparent destruction of the man, away with old-wife prejudices and tales!

"Every age and every nation has a different set of stories; and, as the many are always weak, of consequence they have often, perhaps always, been deceived.

"A man conscious of having acted an honest part among his fellow creatures, even granting that he may have been the sport at times of passions and instincts, he goes to a great Unknown Being, who could have had no other end in giving him existence

but to make him happy; who gave him those passions and instincts and well knows their force.

"These, my worthy friend, are my ideas.

"It becomes a man of sense to think for himself, particularly in a case where all men are equally interested, and where, indeed, all men are equally in the dark."

"Religious nonsense is the most nonsensical nonsense."

"Why has a religious turn of mind always a tendency to narrow and harden the heart?"

"All my fears and cares are for this world."

We have grown tired of gods and goddesses in art. Milton's heavenly militia excites our laughter. Light-houses have driven sirens from the dangerous coasts. We have found that we do not depend on the imagination for wonders—there are millions of miracles under our feet.

Nothing can be more marvelous than the common and everyday facts of life. The phantoms have been cast aside. Men and women are enough for men and women. In their lives is all the tragedy and all the comedy that they can comprehend.

The painter no longer crowds his canvas with the winged and impossible—he paints life as he sees it, people as he knows them, and in whom he is inter-

ested. "The Angelus," the perfection of pathos, is nothing but two peasants bending their heads in thankfulness as they hear the solemn sound of the distant bell—two peasants, who have nothing to be thankful for—nothing but weariness and want, nothing but the crusts that they soften with their tears—nothing. And yet as you look at that picture you feel that they have something besides to be thankful for—that they have life, love, and hope—and so the distant bell makes music in their simple hearts.

Let me give you the difference between culture and nature—between educated talent and real genius.

A little while ago one of the great poets died. I was reading some of his volumes and during the same period was reading a little from Robert Burns. And the difference between these two poets struck me forcibly.

Tennyson was a piece of rare china decorated by the highest art.

Burns was made of honest, human clay, moulded by sympathy and love.

Tennyson dwelt in his fancy, for the most part, with kings and queens, with lords and ladies, with knights and nobles.

Burns lingered by the fireside of the poor and humble, in the thatched cottage of the peasant, with

the imprisoned and despised. He loved men and women in spite of their titles, and without regard to the outward. Through robes and rags he saw and loved the man.

Tennyson was touched by place and power, the insignia given by chance or birth. As he grew old he grew narrower, lost interest in the race, and gave his heart to the class to which he had been lowered as a reward for melodious flattery.

Burns broadened and ripened with the flight of his few years. His sympathies widened and increased to the last.

Tennyson had the art born of intellectual taste, of the sense of mental proportion, knowing the color of adjectives and the gradations of emphasis. His pictures were born in his brain, exquisitely shaded by details, carefully wrought by painful and conscious art.

Burns's brain was the servant of his heart. His melody was a rhythm taught by love. He was touched by the miseries, the injustice, the agony of his time. While Tennyson wrote of the past—of kings long dead, of ladies who had been dust for many centuries, Burns melted with his love the walls of caste—the cruel walls that divide the rich and the poor.

Tennyson celebrated the birth of royal babes, the death of the titled useless; gave wings to degraded dust, wearing the laurels given by those who lived upon the toil of men whom they despised. Burns poured poems from his heart, filled with tears and sobs for the suffering poor; poems that helped to break the chains of millions; poems that the enfranchised love to repeat; poems that liberty loves to hear.

Tennyson was the poet of the past, of the twilight, of the sunset, of decorous regret, of the vanished glories of barbarous times, of the age of chivalry in which great nobles clad in steel smote to death with battle axe and sword the unarmed peasants of the field.

Burns was the poet of the dawn, glad that the night was fading from the east. He kept his face toward the sunrise, caring nothing for the midnight of the past, but loved with all the depth and sincerity of his nature the few great souls—the lustrous stars—that darkness cannot quench.

Tennyson was surrounded with what gold can give, touched with the selfishness of wealth. He was educated at Oxford, and had what are called the advantages of his time, and in maturer years was somewhat swayed by the spirit of caste, by the

descendants of the ancient Pharisees, and at last became a lord.

Burns had but little knowledge of the world. What he knew was taught him by his sympathies. Being a genius, he absorbed the good and noble of which he heard or dreamed, and thus he happily outgrew the smaller things with which he came in contact, and journeyed toward the great—the wider world, until he reached the end.

Tennyson was what is called religious. He believed in the divinity of decorum, not falling on his face before the Eternal King, but bowing gracefully, as all lords should, while uttering thanks for favors partly undeserved, and thanks more fervid still for those to come.

Burns had the deepest and the tenderest feelings in his heart. The winding stream, the flowering shrub, the shady vale—these were trysting places where the real God met those he loved, and where his spirit prompted thoughts and words of thankfulness and praise, took from their hearts the dross of selfishness and hate, leaving the gold of love.

In the religion of Burns, form was nothing, creed was nothing, feeling was everything. He had the religious climate of the soul, the April that receives the seed, the June of blossom, and the month of harvest.

Burns was a real poet of nature. He put fields and woods in his lines. There were principles like oaks, and there were thoughts, hints and suggestions as shy as violets beneath the withered leaves. There were the warmth of home, the social virtues born of equal state, that touched the heart and softened grief; that make breaches in the cruel walls of pride; that make the rich and poor clasp hands and feel like comrades, warm and true.

The house in which his spirit lived was not large. It enclosed only space enough for common needs, built near the barren land of want; but through the open door the sunlight streamed, and from its windows all the stars were seen, while in the garden grew the common flowers—the flowers that all the ages through have been the messengers of honest love; and in the fields were heard the rustling corn, and reaper's songs, telling of well-requited toil; and there were trees whose branches rose and fell and swayed while birds filled all the air with music born of joy. He read with tear-filled eyes the human page, and found within his breast the history of hearts.

Tennyson's imagination lived in a palace ample, wondrous fair, with dome and spire and galleries, where eyes of proud old pedigree grew dim with gazing at the portraits of the worthless dead; and

there were parks and labyrinths of walks and ways and artificial lakes where sailed the "double swans;" and there were flowers from far-off lands with strange perfume, and men and women of the grander sort, telling of better days and nobler deeds than men in these poor times of commerce, trade and toil have hearts to do; and, yet, from this fair dwelling—too vast, too finely wrought, to be a home—he uttered wondrous words, painting pictures that will never fade, and told, with every aid of art, old tales of love and war, sometimes beguiling men of tears, enchanting all with melody of speech, and sometimes rousing blood and planting seeds of high resolve and noble deeds; and sometimes thoughts were woven like tapestries in patterns beautiful, involved and strange, where dreams and fancies interlaced like tendrils of a vine, like harmonies that wander and return to catch the music of the central theme, yet cold as traceries in frost wrought on glass by winter's subtle art.

Tennyson was ingenious—Burns ingenuous. One was exclusive, and in his exclusiveness a little disdain. The other pressed the world against his heart.

Tennyson touched art on many sides, dealing with vast poetic themes, and satisfied in many ways the intellectual tastes of cultured men.

Tennyson is always perfectly self-possessed. He has poetic sympathy, but not the fire and flame. No one thinks of him as having been excited, as being borne away by passion's storm. His pulse never rises. In artistic calm, he turns, polishes, perfects, embroiders and beautifies. In him there is nothing of the storm and chaos, nothing of the creative genius, no sea wrought to fury, filling the heavens with its shattered cry.

Burns dwelt with simple things—with those that touch the heart; that tell of joy; that spring from labor done; that lift the burdens of despair from fainting souls; that soften hearts until the pearls of pity fall from eyes unused to weep.

To illustrate his thought, he used the things he knew—the things familiar to the world—not caring for the vanished things—the legends told by artful tongues to artless ears—but clinging to the common things of life and love and death, adorning them with countless gems; and, over all, he placed the bow of hope.

With him the man was greater than the king, the woman than the queen. The greatest were the noblest, and the noblest were those who loved their fellow-men the best, the ones who filled their lives with generous deeds. Men admire Tennyson. Men love Robert Burns.

He was a believer in God, and had confidence that this God was sitting at the loom weaving with warp and woof of cause and effect, of fear and fancy, pain and hope, of dream and shadows, of despair and death, mingled with the light of love, the tapestries in which at last all souls will see that all was perfect from the first. He believed or hoped that the spirit of infinite goodness, soft as the autumn air, filled all of heaven's dome with love.

Such a religion is easy to understand when it includes all races through all times. It is consistent, if not with the highest thought, with the deepest and the tenderest feelings of the heart.

From Cradle to Coffin.

There is no time to follow the steps of Burns from old Alloway, by the Bonnie Doon in the clay-built hut, where the January wind blew hansel in on Robin—to Mt. Oliphant, with its cold and stingy soil, the hard factor, whose letters made the children weep—working in the fields, or tired with "The thresher's weary flinging tree," where he was thrilled, for the first time with love's sweet pain that set his heart to music.

To Lochlea, still giving wings to thought—still working in the unproductive fields, Lochlea where his father died, and reached the rest that life denied.

To Mossgiel, where Burns reached the top and summit of his art and wrote like one enrapt, inspired. Here he met and loved and gave to immortality his Highland Mary.

To Edinburgh and fame, and back to Mauchline to Jean Armour and honor, the noblest deed of all his life.

To Ellisland, by the winding Nith.

To Dumfries, a poor exciseman, wearing out his heart in the disgusting details of degrading drudgery—suspected of treason because he preferred Washington to Pitt—because he sympathized with the French Revolution—because he was glad that the American colonies had become a free nation.

At a banquet once, being asked to drink the health of Pitt, Burns said: "I will give you a better toast—George Washington." A little while after, when they wanted him to drink to the success of the English arms, Burns said: "No; I will drink this: May their success equal the justice of their cause." He sent three or four little cannon to the French Convention, because he sympathized with the French Revolution, and because of these little things, his love of liberty, of freedom and justice, at Dumfries he was suspected of being a traitor, and, as a result of these

trivial things, as a result of that suspicion, Burns was obliged to join the Dumfries volunteers.

How pitiful that the author of "Scots wha hae with Wallace bled," should be thought an enemy of Scotland!

Poor Burns! Old and broken before his time—surrounded by the walking lumps of Dumfries' clay!

To appease the anger of his fellow-citizens—to convince them that he was a patriot, he actually joined the Dumfries volunteers,—bought his uniform on credit—amount about seven pounds—was unable to pay—was threatened with arrest and a jail by Matthew Penn.

These threats embittered his last hours.

A little while before his death, he said: "Do not let that awkward squad—the Dumfries volunteers—fire over my grave." We have a true insight into what his feelings were. But they fired. They were bound to fire or die.

The last words uttered by Robert Burns were these: "That damned scoundrel Matthew Penn."

Burns had another art, the art of ending—of stopping at the right place. Nothing is more difficult than this. It is hard to end a play—to get the right kind of roof on a house. Not one story-teller in a thousand knows just the spot where the rocket

should explode. They go on talking after the stick has fallen.

Burns wrote short poems, and why? All great poems are short. There cannot be a long poem any more than there can be a long joke. I believe the best example of an ending perfectly accomplished you will find in his "Vision."

There comes into his house, into that "auld clay biggin," his muse, the spirit of a beautiful woman, and tells him what he can do, and what he can't do, as a poet. He has a long talk with her and now the thing is how to get her out of the house. You may think that it is an easy thing. It is easy to get yourself into difficulty, but not to get out.

I was struck with the beautiful manner in which Burns got that angel out of the house.

Nothing could be happier than the ending of the "Vision"—the leave-taking of the Muse:

> "And wear thou this, she solemn said,
> And bound the holly round my head:
> The polished leaves and berries red
> Did rustling play;
> And, like a passing thought she fled
> In light away."

How that man rose above all his fellows in death! Do you know, there is something wonderful in

death. What a repose! What a piece of sculpture! The common man dead looks royal; a genius dead, sublime.

When a few years ago I visited all the places where Burns had been, from the little house of clay with one room where he was born, to the little house with one room where he now sleeps, I thought of this. Yes, I visited them all, all the places made immortal by his genius, the field where love first touched his heart, the field where he ploughed up the home of the Mouse. I saw the cottage where Robert and Jean first lived as man and wife, and walked on "the banks and braes of Bonnie Doon." And when I stood by his grave, I said: This man was a radical, a real genuine man. This man believed in the dignity of labor, in the nobility of the useful. This man believed in human love, in making a heaven here, in judging men by their deeds instead of creeds and titles. This man believed in the liberty of the soul, of thought and speech. This man believed in the sacred rights of the individual; he sympathized with the suffering and oppressed. This man had the genius to change suffering and toil into song, to enrich poverty, to make a peasant feel like a prince of the blood, to fill the lives of the lowly with love and light. This man had the genius to

make robes of glory out of squalid rags. This man had the genius to make Cleopatras, and Sapphos and Helens out of the freckled girls of the villages and fields—and he had the genius to make Auld Ayr, and Bonnie Doon, and Sweet Afton and the Winding Nith murmur the name of Robert Burns forever.

This man left a legacy of glory to Scotland and the whole world; he enriched our language, and with a generous hand scattered the gems of thought. This man was the companion of poverty, and wept the tears of grief, and yet he has caused millions to shed the happy tears of joy.

His heart blossomed in a thousand songs—songs for all times and all seasons—suited to every experience of the heart—songs for the dawn of love—for the glance and clasp and kiss of courtship—for "favors secret, sweet and precious"—for the glow and flame, the ecstasy and rapture of wedded life—songs of parting and despair—songs of hope and simple joy—songs for the vanished days—songs for birth and burial—songs for wild war's deadly blast, and songs for gentle peace—songs for the dying and the dead—songs for labor and content—songs for the spinning wheel, the sickle and the plow—songs for sunshine and for storm, for laughter and for tears—

songs that will be sung as long as language lives and passion sways the heart of man.

And when I was at his birth-place, at that little clay house where he was born, standing in that sacred place, I wrote these lines :

Though Scotland boasts a thousand names,
Of patriot, king and peer,
The noblest, grandest of them all,
Was loved and cradled here.
Here lived the gentle peasant-prince,
The loving cotter-king,
Compared with whom the greatest lord
Is but a titled thing.

'Tis but a cot roofed in with straw,
A hovel made of clay ;
One door shuts out the snow and storm,
One window greets the day ;
And yet I stand within this room,
And hold all thrones in scorn ;
For here beneath this lowly thatch,
Love's sweetest bard was born.

Within this hallowed hut I feel
Like one who clasps a shrine,
When the glad lips at last have touched
The something deemed divine.
And here the world through all the years,
As long as day returns,
The tribute of its love and tears,
Will pay to Robert Burns.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

I.

ON the 12th of February, 1809, two babes were born—one in the woods of Kentucky, amid the hardships and poverty of pioneers; one in England, surrounded by wealth and culture. One was educated in the University of Nature, the other at Cambridge.

One associated his name with the enfranchisement of labor, with the emancipation of millions, with the salvation of the Republic. He is known to us as Abraham Lincoln.

The other broke the chains of superstition and filled the world with intellectual light, and he is known as Charles Darwin.

Nothing is grander than to break chains from the

bodies of men — nothing nobler than to destroy the phantoms of the soul.

Because of these two men the nineteenth century is illustrious.

A few men and women make a nation glorious— Shakespeare made England immortal, Voltaire civilized and humanized France; Goethe, Schiller and Humboldt lifted Germany into the light. Angelo, Raphael, Galileo and Bruno crowned with fadeless laurel the Italian brow, and now the most precious treasure of the Great Republic is the memory of Abraham Lincoln.

Every generation has its heroes, its iconoclasts, its pioneers, its ideals. The people always have been and still are divided, at least into classes—the many, who with their backs to the sunrise worship the past, and the few, who keep their faces toward the dawn—the many, who are satisfied with the world as it is; the few, who labor and suffer for the future, for those to be, and who seek to rescue the oppressed, to destroy the cruel distinctions of caste, and to civilize mankind.

Yet it sometimes happens that the liberator of one age becomes the oppressor of the next. His reputation becomes so great — he is so revered and wor-

shiped — that his followers, in his name, attack the hero who endeavors to take another step in advance.

The heroes of the Revolution, forgetting the justice for which they fought, put chains upon the limbs of others, and in their names the lovers of liberty were denounced as ingrates and traitors.

During the Revolution our fathers to justify their rebellion dug down to the bed-rock of human rights and planted their standard there. They declared that all men were entitled to liberty and that government derived its power from the consent of the governed. But when victory came, the great principles were forgotten and chains were put upon the limbs of men. Both of the great political parties were controlled by greed and selfishness. Both were the defenders and protectors of slavery. For nearly three-quarters of a century these parties had control of the Republic. The principal object of both parties was the protection of the infamous institution. Both were eager to secure the Southern vote and both sacrificed principle and honor upon the altar of success.

At last the Whig party died and the Republican was born. This party was opposed to the further extension of slavery. The Democratic party of the

South wished to make the "divine institution" national—while the Democrats of the North wanted the question decided by each territory for itself.

Each of these parties had conservatives and extremists. The extremists of the Democratic party were in the rear and wished to go back; the extremists of the Republican party were in the front, and wished to go forward. The extreme Democrat was willing to destroy the Union for the sake of slavery, and the extreme Republican was willing to destroy the Union for the sake of liberty.

Neither party could succeed without the votes of its extremists.

This was the condition in 1858–60.

When Lincoln was a child his parents removed from Kentucky to Indiana. A few trees were felled —a log hut open to the south, no floor, no window, was built—a little land plowed and here the Lincolns lived. Here the patient, thoughtful, silent, loving mother died—died in the wide forest as a leaf dies, leaving nothing to her son but the memory of her love.

In a few years the family moved to Illinois. Lincoln then almost grown, clad in skins, with no woven stitch upon his body—walking and driving the

cattle. Another farm was opened—a few acres subdued and enough raised to keep the wolf from the door. Lincoln quit the farm—went down the Ohio and Mississippi as a hand on a flat-boat—afterward clerked in a country store—then in partnership with another bought the store—failed. Nothing left but a few debts—learned the art of surveying—made about half a living and paid something on the debts—read law—admitted to the bar—tried a few small cases—nominated for the Legislature and made a speech.

This speech was in favor of a tariff, not only for revenue, but to encourage American manufacturers and to protect American workingmen. Lincoln knew then as well as we do now, that everything, to the limits of the possible, that Americans use should be produced by the energy, skill and ingenuity of Americans. He knew that the more industries we had, the greater variety of things we made, the greater would be the development of the American brain. And he knew that great men and great women are the best things that a nation can produce,—the finest crop a country can possibly raise.

He knew that a nation that sells raw material will

grow ignorant and poor, while the people who manufacture will grow intelligent and rich. To dig, to chop, to plow, requires more muscle than mind, more strength than thought.

To invent, to manufacture, to take advantage of the forces of nature — this requires thought, talent, genius. This develops the brain and gives wings to the imagination.

It is better for Americans to purchase from Americans, even if the things purchased cost more.

If we purchase a ton of steel rails from England for twenty dollars, then we have the rails and England the money. But if we buy a ton of steel rails from an American for twenty-five dollars, then America has both the rails and the money.

Judging from the present universal depression and the recent elections, Lincoln, in his first speech, stood on solid rock and was absolutely right. Lincoln was educated in the University of Nature — educated by cloud and star — by field and winding stream — by billowed plains and solemn forests — by morning's birth and death of day — by storm and night — by the ever eager Spring — by Summer's wealth of leaf and vine and flower — the sad and transient glories of the Autumn woods — and Win-

ter, builder of home and fireside, and whose storms without, create the social warmth within.

He was perfectly acquainted with the political questions of the day—heard them discussed at taverns and country stores, at voting places and courts and on the stump. He knew all the arguments for and against, and no man of his time was better equipped for intellectual conflict. He knew the average mind—the thoughts of the people, the hopes and prejudices of his fellow-men. He had the power of accurate statement. He was logical, candid and sincere. In addition, he had the "touch of nature that makes the whole world kin."

In 1858 he was a candidate for the Senate against Stephen A. Douglas.

The extreme Democrats would not vote for Douglas, but the extreme Republicans did vote for Lincoln. Lincoln occupied the middle ground, and was the compromise candidate of his own party. He had lived for many years in the intellectual territory of compromise—in a part of our country settled by Northern and Southern men—where Northern and Southern ideas met, and the ideas of the two sections were brought together and compared.

The sympathies of Lincoln, his ties of kindred,

were with the South. His convictions, his sense of justice, and his ideals, were with the North. He knew the horrors of slavery, and he felt the unspeakable ecstasies and glories of freedom. He had the kindness, the gentleness, of true greatness, and he could not have been a master; he had the manhood and independence of true greatness, and he could not have been a slave. He was just, and was incapable of putting a burden upon others that he himself would not willingly bear.

He was merciful and profound, and it was not necessary for him to read the history of the world to know that liberty and slavery could not live in the same nation, or in the same brain. Lincoln was a statesman. And there is this difference between a politician and a statesman. A politician schemes and works in every way to make the people do something for him. A statesman wishes to do something for the people. With him place and power are means to an end, and the end is the good of his country.

In this campaign Lincoln demonstrated three things —first, that he was the intellectual superior of his opponent; second, that he was right; and third, that a majority of the voters of Illinois were on his side.

II.

IN 1860 the Republic reached a crisis. The conflict between liberty and slavery could no longer be delayed. For three-quarters of a century the forces had been gathering for the battle.

After the Revolution, principle was sacrificed for the sake of gain. The Constitution contradicted the Declaration. Liberty as a principle was held in contempt. Slavery took possession of the Government. Slavery made the laws, corrupted courts, dominated Presidents and demoralized the people.

I do not hold the South responsible for slavery any more than I do the North. The fact is, that individuals and nations act as they must. There is no chance. Back of every event — of every hope, prejudice, fancy and dream — of every opinion and belief — of every vice and virtue — of every smile and curse, is the efficient cause. The present moment is the child, and the necessary child, of all the past.

Northern politicians wanted office, and so they defended slavery; Northern merchants wanted to sell their goods to the South, and so they were the enemies of freedom. The preacher wished to please

the people who paid his salary, and so he denounced the slave for not being satisfied with the position in which the good God had placed him.

The respectable, the rich, the prosperous, the holders of and the seekers for office, held liberty in contempt. They regarded the Constitution as far more sacred than the rights of men. Candidates for the presidency were applauded because they had tried to make slave States of free territory, and the highest court solemnly and ignorantly decided that colored men and women had no rights. Men who insisted that freedom was better than slavery, and that mothers should not be robbed of their babes, were hated, despised and mobbed. Mr. Douglas voiced the feelings of millions when he declared that he did not care whether slavery was voted up or down. Upon this question the people, a majority of them, were almost savages. Honor, manhood, conscience, principle — all sacrificed for the sake of gain or office.

From the heights of philosophy — standing above the contending hosts, above the prejudices, the sentimentalities of the day — Lincoln was great enough and brave enough and wise enough to utter these prophetic words :

"A house divided against itself cannot stand. I believe this Government cannot permanently endure half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved; I do not expect the house to fall; but I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all the one thing or the other. Either the opponents of slavery will arrest the further spread of it, and place it where the public mind shall rest in the belief that it is in the course of ultimate extinction, or its advocates will push it further until it becomes alike lawful in all the States, old as well as new, North as well as South."

This declaration was the standard around which gathered the grandest political party the world has ever seen, and this declaration made Lincoln the leader of that vast host.

In this, the first great crisis, Lincoln uttered the victorious truth that made him the foremost man in the Republic.

The Republican party nominated him for the presidency and the people decided at the polls that a house divided against itself could not stand, and that slavery had cursed soul and soil enough.

It is not a common thing to elect a really great man to fill the highest official position. I do not say that the great Presidents have been chosen by accident. Probably it would be better to say that they were the favorites of a happy chance.

The average man is afraid of genius. He feels as

an awkward man feels in the presence of a sleight-of-hand performer. He admires and suspects. Genius appears to carry too much sail — to lack prudence, has too much courage. The ballast of dullness inspires confidence.

By a happy chance Lincoln was nominated and elected in spite of his fitness — and the patient, gentle, just and loving man was called upon to bear as great a burden as man has ever borne.

III.

THEN came another crisis — the crisis of Secession and Civil war.

Again Lincoln spoke the deepest feeling and the highest thought of the Nation. In his first message he said:

"The central idea of secession is the essence of anarchy."

He also showed conclusively that the North and South, in spite of secession, must remain face to face — that physically they could not separate — that they must have more or less commerce, and that this commerce must be carried on either between the two sections as friends, or as aliens.

This situation and its consequences he pointed out to absolute perfection in these words:

"Can aliens make treaties easier than friends can make laws? Can treaties be more faithfully enforced between aliens than laws among friends?"

After having stated fully and fairly the philosophy of the conflict, after having said enough to satisfy any calm and thoughtful mind, he addressed himself to the hearts of America. Probably there are few finer passages in literature than the close of Lincoln's inaugural address:

"I am loth to close. We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained, it must not break, our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory stretching from every battlefield and patriotic grave to every loving heart and hearthstone all over this broad land, will swell the chorus of the Union when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature."

These noble, these touching, these pathetic words, were delivered in the presence of rebellion, in the midst of spies and conspirators—surrounded by but few friends, most of whom were unknown, and some of whom were wavering in their fidelity — at a time when secession was arrogant and organized, when patriotism was silent, and when, to quote the expressive words of Lincoln himself, "Sinners were calling the righteous to repentance."

When Lincoln became President, he was held in

contempt by the South — underrated by the North and East — not appreciated even by his cabinet — and yet he was not only one of the wisest, but one of the shrewdest of mankind. Knowing that he had the right to enforce the laws of the Union in all parts of the United States and Territories — knowing, as he did, that the secessionists were in the wrong, he also knew that they had sympathizers not only in the North, but in other lands.

Consequently, he felt that it was of the utmost importance that the South should fire the first shot, should do some act that would solidify the North, and gain for us the justification of the civilized world.

He proposed to give food to the soldiers at Sumter. He asked the advice of all his cabinet on this question, and all, with the exception of Montgomery Blair, answered in the negative, giving their reasons in writing. In spite of this, Lincoln took his own course — endeavored to send the supplies, and while thus engaged, doing his simple duty, the South commenced actual hostilities and fired on the fort. The course pursued by Lincoln was absolutely right, and the act of the South to a great extent solidified the North, and gained for the Republic the justification of a great number of people in other lands.

At that time Lincoln appreciated the scope and consequences of the impending conflict. Above all other thoughts in his mind was this:

"This conflict will settle the question, at least for "centuries to come, whether man is capable of "governing himself, and consequently is of greater "importance to the free than to the enslaved."

He knew what depended on the issue and he said:

"We shall nobly save, or meanly lose, the last, "best hope of earth."

IV.

THEN came a crisis in the North. It became clearer and clearer to Lincoln's mind, day by day, that the Rebellion was slavery, and that it was necessary to keep the border States on the side of the Union. For this purpose he proposed a scheme of emancipation and colonization — a scheme by which the owners of slaves should be paid the full value of what they called their "property."

He knew that if the border States agreed to gradual emancipation, and received compensation for their slaves, they would be forever lost to the Confederacy, whether secession succeeded or not. It was objected at the time, by some, that the scheme

was far too expensive; but Lincoln, wiser than his advisers — far wiser than his enemies — demonstrated that from an economical point of view, his course was best.

He proposed that $400 be paid for slaves, including men, women and children. This was a large price, and yet he showed how much cheaper it was to purchase than to carry on the war.

At that time, at the price mentioned, there were about $750,000 worth of slaves in Delaware. The cost of carrying on the war was at least two millions of dollars a day, and for one-third of one day's expenses, all the slaves in Delaware could be purchased. He also showed that all the slaves in Delaware, Maryland, Kentucky and Missouri could be bought, at the same price, for less than the expense of carrying on the war for eighty-seven days.

This was the wisest thing that could have been proposed, and yet such was the madness of the South, such the indignation of the North, that the advice was unheeded.

Again, in July, 1862, he urged on the Representatives of the border States a scheme of gradual compensated emancipation; but the Representatives were too deaf to hear, too blind to see.

Lincoln always hated slavery, and yet he felt the obligations and duties of his position. In his first message he assured the South that the laws, including the most odious of all — the law for the return of fugitive slaves — would be enforced. The South would not hear. Afterward he proposed to purchase the slaves of the border States, but the proposition was hardly discussed — hardly heard. Events came thick and fast; theories gave way to facts, and everything was left to force.

The extreme Democrat of the North was fearful that slavery might be destroyed, that the Constitution might be broken, and that Lincoln, after all, could not be trusted; and at the same time the radical Republican feared that Lincoln loved the Union more than he did liberty.

The fact is, that he tried to discharge the obligations of his great office, knowing from the first that slavery must perish. The course pursued by Lincoln was so gentle, so kind and persistent, so wise and logical, that millions of Northern Democrats sprang to the defence, not only of the Union, but of his administration. Lincoln refused to be led or hurried by Fremont or Hunter, by Greeley or Sumner. From first to last he was the real leader, and he kept step with events.

V.

ON the 22d of July, 1862, Lincoln sent word to the members of his cabinet that he wished to see them. It so happened that Secretary Chase was the first to arrive. He found Lincoln reading a book. Looking up from the page, the President said: "Chase, did you ever read this book?" "What book is it?" asked Chase. "Artemus Ward," replied Lincoln. "Let me read you this chapter, entitled '*Wax Wurx in Albany.*'" And so he began reading while the other members of the cabinet one by one came in. At last Stanton told Mr. Lincoln that he was in a great hurry, and if any business was to be done he would like to do it at once. Whereupon Mr. Lincoln laid down the open book, opened a drawer, took out a paper and said: "Gentlemen, I have called you together to notify you what I have determined to do. I want no advice. Nothing can change my mind."

He then read the Proclamation of Emancipation. Chase thought there ought to be something about God at the close, to which Lincoln replied: "Put it in, it won't hurt it." It was also agreed that the

President would wait for a victory in the field before giving the Proclamation to the world.

The meeting was over, the members went their way. Mr. Chase was the last to go, and as he went through the door looked back and saw that Mr. Lincoln had taken up the book and was again engrossed in the *Wax Wurx at Albany.*

This was on the 22d of July, 1862. On the 22d of August of the same year—after Lincoln wrote his celebrated letter to Horace Greeley, in which he stated that his object was to save the Union; *that he would save it with slavery if he could;* that if it was necessary to destroy slavery in order to save the Union, he would; in other words, he would do what was necessary to save the Union.

This letter disheartened, to a great degree, thousands and millions of the friends of freedom. They felt that Mr. Lincoln had not attained the moral height upon which they supposed he stood. And yet, when this letter was written, the Emancipation Proclamation was in his hands, and had been for thirty days, waiting only an opportunity to give it to the world.

Some two weeks after the letter to Greeley, Lincoln was waited on by a committee of clergymen,

and was by them informed that it was God's will that he should issue a Proclamation of Emancipation. He replied to them, in substance, that the day of miracles had passed. He also mildly and kindly suggested that if it were God's will this Proclamation should be issued, certainly God would have made known that will to him — to the person whose duty it was to issue it.

On the 22d day of September, 1862, the most glorious date in the history of the Republic, the Proclamation of Emancipation was issued.

Lincoln had reached the generalization of all argument upon the question of slavery and freedom — a generalization that never has been, and probably never will be, excelled:

"In giving freedom to the slave, we assure freedom to the free."

This is absolutely true. Liberty can be retained, can be enjoyed, only by giving it to others. The spendthrift saves, the miser is prodigal. In the realm of Freedom, waste is husbandry. He who puts chains upon the body of another shackles his own soul. The moment the Proclamation was issued the cause of the Republic became sacred. From that moment the North fought for the human race.

From that moment the North stood under the blue and stars, the flag of Nature, sublime and free.

In 1831, Lincoln went down the Mississippi on a flat-boat. He received the extravagant salary of ten dollars a month. When he reached New Orleans, he and some of his companions went about the city.

Among other places, they visited a slave market, where men and women were being sold at auction. A young colored girl was on the block. Lincoln heard the brutal words of the auctioneer — the savage remarks of bidders. The scene filled his soul with indignation and horror.

Turning to his companions, he said, "Boys, if I ever get a chance to hit slavery, by God I'll hit it hard!"

The helpless girl, unconsciously, had planted in a great heart the seeds of the Proclamation.

Thirty-one years afterward the chance came, the oath was kept, and to four millions of slaves, of men, women and children, was restored liberty, the jewel of the soul.

In the history, in the fiction of the world, there is nothing more intensely dramatic than this.

Lincoln held within his brain the grandest truths,

and he held them as unconsciously, as easily, as naturally, as a waveless pool holds within its stainless breast a thousand stars.

In these two years we had traveled from the Ordinance of Secession to the Proclamation of Emancipation.

VI.

WE were surrounded by enemies. Many of the so-called great in Europe and England were against us. They hated the Republic, despised our institutions, and sought in many ways to aid the South.

Mr. Gladstone announced that Jefferson Davis had made a nation, and that he did not believe the restoration of the American Union by force attainable.

From the Vatican came words of encouragement for the South.

It was declared that the North was fighting for empire and the South for independence.

The Marquis of Salisbury said: "The people of the South are the natural allies of England. The North keeps an opposition shop in the same department of trade as ourselves."

Not a very elevated sentiment — but English.

Some of their statesmen declared that the subjugation of the South by the North would be a calamity to the world.

Louis Napoleon was another enemy, and he endeavored to establish a monarchy in Mexico, to the end that the great North might be destroyed. But the patience, the uncommon common sense, the statesmanship of Lincoln — in spite of foreign hate and Northern division — triumphed over all. And now we forgive all foes. Victory makes forgiveness easy.

Lincoln was by nature a diplomat. He knew the art of sailing against the wind. He had as much shrewdness as is consistent with honesty. He understood, not only the rights of individuals, but of nations. In all his correspondence with other governments he neither wrote nor sanctioned a line which afterward was used to tie his hands. In the use of perfect English he easily rose above all his advisers and all his fellows.

No one claims that Lincoln did all. He could have done nothing without the generals in the field, and the generals could have done nothing without their armies. The praise is due to all — to the

private as much as to the officer; to the lowest who did his duty, as much as to the highest.

My heart goes out to the brave private as much as to the leader of the host.

But Lincoln stood at the centre and with infinite patience, with consummate skill, with the genius of goodness, directed, cheered, consoled and conquered.

VII.

SLAVERY was the cause of the war, and slavery was the perpetual stumbling-block. As the war went on, question after question arose — questions that could not be answered by theories. Should we hand back the slave to his master, when the master was using his slave to destroy the Union? If the South was right, slaves were property, and by the laws of war anything that might be used to the advantage of the enemy might be confiscated by us. Events did not wait for discussion. General Butler denominated the negro as "a contraband." Congress provided that the property of the rebels might be confiscated.

The extreme Democrats of the North regarded the slave as more sacred than life. It was no harm

to kill the master — to burn his house, to ravage his fields — but you must not free his slave.

If in war a nation has the right to take the property of its citizens — of its friends — certainly it has the right to take the property of those it has the right to kill.

Lincoln was wise enough to know that war is governed by the laws of war, and that during the conflict constitutions are silent. All that he could do he did in the interests of peace. He offered to execute every law — including the most infamous of all — to buy the slaves in the border States — to establish gradual, compensated emancipation; but the South would not hear. Then he confiscated the property of rebels — treated the slaves as contraband of war, used them to put down the Rebellion, armed them and clothed them in the uniform of the Republic — was in favor of making them citizens and allowing them to stand on an equality with their white brethren under the flag of the Nation. During these years Lincoln moved with events, and every step he took has been justified by the considerate judgment of mankind.

VIII.

LINCOLN not only watched the war, but kept his hand on the political pulse. In 1863 a tide set in against the administration. A Republican meeting was to be held in Springfield, Illinois, and Lincoln wrote a letter to be read at this convention. It was in his happiest vein. It was a perfect defence of his administration, including the Proclamation of Emancipation. Among other things he said:

"But the proclamation, as law, either is valid or it is not valid. If it is not valid it needs no retraction, but if it is valid it cannot be retracted, any more than the dead can be brought to life."

To the Northern Democrats who said they would not fight for negroes, Lincoln replied:

"Some of them seem willing to fight for you — but no matter."

Of negro soldiers:

"But negroes, like other people, act upon motives. Why should they do anything for us if we will do nothing for them? If they stake their lives for us they must be prompted by the strongest motive — even the promise of freedom. And the promise, being made, must be kept."

There is one line in this letter that will give it immortality:

"The Father of waters again goes unvexed to the sea."

This line is worthy of Shakespeare.

Another:

"Among free men there can be no successful appeal from the ballot to the bullet."

He draws a comparison between the white men against us and the black men for us:

"And then there will be some black men who can remember that with silent tongue and clenched teeth and steady eye and well-poised bayonet they have helped mankind on to this great consummation; while I fear there will be some white ones unable to forget that with malignant heart and deceitful speech they strove to hinder it."

Under the influence of this letter, the love of country, of the Union, and above all, the love of liberty, took possession of the heroic North.

There was the greatest moral exaltation ever known.

The spirit of liberty took possession of the people. The masses became sublime.

To fight for yourself is natural — to fight for others is grand; to fight for your country is noble — to

fight for the human race — for the liberty of hand and brain — is nobler still.

As a matter of fact, the defenders of slavery had sown the seeds of their own defeat. They dug the pit in which they fell. Clay and Webster and thousands of others had by their eloquence made the Union almost sacred. The Union was the very tree of life, the source and stream and sea of liberty and law.

For the sake of slavery millions stood by the Union, for the sake of liberty millions knelt at the altar of the Union; and this love of the Union is what, at last, overwhelmed the Confederate hosts.

It does not seem possible that only a few years ago our Constitution, our laws, our Courts, the Pulpit and the Press defended and upheld the institution of slavery — that it was a crime to feed the hungry — to give water to the lips of thirst — shelter to a woman flying from the whip and chain!

The old flag still flies — the stars are there — the stains have gone.

IX.

LINCOLN always saw the end. He was unmoved by the storms and currents of the times. He advanced too rapidly for the conservative politicians, too slowly for the radical enthusiasts. He occupied the line of safety, and held by his personality — by the force of his great character, by his charming candor — the masses on his side.

The soldiers thought of him as a father.

All who had lost their sons in battle felt that they had his sympathy—felt that his face was as sad as theirs. They knew that Lincoln was actuated by one motive, and that his energies were bent to the attainment of one end — the salvation of the Republic.

They knew that he was kind, sincere and merciful. They knew that in his veins there was no drop of tyrants' blood. They knew that he used his power to protect the innocent, to save reputation and life — that he had the brain of a philosopher — the heart of a mother.

During all the years of war, Lincoln stood the embodiment of mercy, between discipline and death. He pitied the imprisoned and condemned. He took

the unfortunate in his arms, and was the friend even of the convict. He knew temptation's strength — the weakness of the will — and how in fury's sudden flame the judgment drops the scales, and passion — blind and deaf — usurps the throne.

One day a woman, accompanied by a Senator, called on the President. The woman was the wife of one of Mosby's men. Her husband had been captured, tried and condemned to be shot. She came to ask for the pardon of her husband. The President heard her story and then asked what kind of man her husband was. "Is he intemperate, does he abuse the children and beat you?" "No, no," said the wife, "he is a good man, a good husband, he loves me and he loves the children, and we cannot live without him. The only trouble is that he is a fool about politics — I live in the North, born there, and if I get him home, he will do no more fighting for the South." "Well," said Mr. Lincoln, after examining the papers, "I will pardon your husband and turn him over to you for safe keeping." The poor woman, overcome with joy, sobbed as though her heart would break.

"My dear woman," said Lincoln, "if I had known how badly it was going to make you feel, I never

would have pardoned him." "You do not understand me," she cried between her sobs. "You do not understand me." "Yes, yes, I do," answered the President, "and if you do not go away at once I shall be crying with you."

On another occasion, a member of Congress, on his way to see Lincoln, found in one of the anterooms of the White House an old white-haired man, sobbing — his wrinkled face wet with tears. The old man told him that for several days he had tried to see the President — that he wanted a pardon for his son. The Congressman told the old man to come with him and he would introduce him to Mr. Lincoln. On being introduced, the old man said: "Mr. Lincoln, my wife sent me to you. We had three boys. They all joined your army. One of 'em has been killed, one's a fighting now, and one of 'em, the youngest, has been tried for deserting and he's going to be shot day after to-morrow. He never deserted. He's wild, and he may have drunk too much and wandered off, but he never deserted. 'T aint in the blood. He's his mother's favorite, and if he's shot, I know she'll die." The President, turning to his secretary, said: "Telegraph General Butler to suspend the execution in the case of———

[giving the name] until further orders from me, and ask him to answer ———."

The Congressman congratulated the old man on his success — but the old man did not respond. He was not satisfied. "Mr. President," he began, "I can't take that news home. It won't satisfy his mother. How do I know but what you'll give further orders to-morrow?" "My good man," said Mr. Lincoln, "I have to do the best I can. The generals are complaining because I pardon so many. They say that my mercy destroys discipline. Now, when you get home you tell his mother what you said to me about my giving further orders, and then you tell her that I said this: 'If your son lives until they get further orders from me, that when he does die people will say that old Methusaleh was a baby compared to him.'"

The pardoning power is the only remnant of absolute sovereignty that a President has. Through all the years, Lincoln will be known as Lincoln the loving, Lincoln the merciful.

X.

LINCOLN had the keenest sense of humor, and always saw the laughable side even of disaster. In his humor there was logic and the best of sense. No matter how complicated the question, or how embarrassing the situation, his humor furnished an answer and a door of escape.

Vallandigham was a friend of the South, and did what he could to sow the seeds of failure. In his opinion everything, except rebellion, was unconstitutional.

He was arrested, convicted by a court martial, and sentenced to imprisonment.

There was doubt about the legality of the trial, and thousands in the North denounced the whole proceeding as tyrannical and infamous. At the same time millions demanded that Vallandigham should be punished.

Lincoln's humor came to the rescue. He disapproved of the findings of the court, changed the punishment, and ordered that Mr. Vallandigham should be sent to his friends in the South.

Those who regarded the act as unconstitutional almost forgave it for the sake of its humor.

Horace Greeley always had the idea that he was greatly superior to Lincoln, because he lived in a larger town, and for a long time insisted that the people of the North and the people of the South desired peace. He took it upon himself to lecture Lincoln. Lincoln, with that wonderful sense of humor, united with shrewdness and profound wisdom, told Greeley that, if the South really wanted peace, he (Lincoln) desired the same thing, and was doing all he could to bring it about. Greeley insisted that a commissioner should be appointed, with authority to negotiate with the representatives of the Confederacy. This was Lincoln's opportunity. He authorized Greeley to act as such commissioner. The great editor felt that he was caught. For a time he hesitated, but finally went, and found that the Southern commissioners were willing to take into consideration any offers of peace that Lincoln might make, consistent with the independence of the Confederacy.

The failure of Greeley was humiliating, and the position in which he was left, absurd.

Again the humor of Lincoln had triumphed.

Lincoln, to satisfy a few fault-finders in the North, went to Grant's headquarters and met some Con-

federate commissioners. He urged that it was hardly proper for him to negotiate with the representatives of rebels in arms — that if the South wanted peace, all they had to do was to stop fighting. One of the commissioners cited as a precedent the fact that Charles the First negotiated with rebels in arms. To which Lincoln replied that Charles the First lost his head.

The conference came to nothing, as Mr. Lincoln expected.

The commissioners, one of them being Alexander H. Stephens, who, when in good health, weighed about ninety pounds, dined with the President and Gen. Grant. After dinner, as they were leaving, Stephens put on an English ulster, the tails of which reached the ground, while the collar was somewhat above the wearer's head.

As Stephens went out, Lincoln touched Grant and said: "Grant, look at Stephens. Did you ever see as little a nubbin with as much shuck?"

Lincoln always tried to do things in the easiest way. He did not waste his strength. He was not particular about moving along straight lines. He did not tunnel the mountains. He was willing to go around, and reach the end desired as a river reaches the sea.

XI.

ONE of the most wonderful things ever done by Lincoln was the promotion of General Hooker. After the battle of Fredericksburg, General Burnside found great fault with Hooker, and wished to have him removed from the Army of the Potomac. Lincoln disapproved of Burnside's order, and gave Hooker the command. He then wrote Hooker this memorable letter:

"I have placed you at the head of the Army of the Potomac. Of course I have done this upon what appears to me to be sufficient reasons, and yet I think it best for you to know that there are some things in regard to which I am not quite satisfied with you. I believe you to be a brave and skillful soldier — which, of course, I like. I also believe you do not mix politics with your profession — in which you are right. You have confidence — which is a valuable, if not an indispensable, quality. You are ambitious, which, within reasonable bounds, does good rather than harm; but I think that during General Burnside's command of the army you have taken counsel of your ambition to thwart him as much as you could — in which you did a great wrong to the country and to a most meritorious and honorable brother officer. I have heard, in such a way as to believe it, of your recently saying that both the army and the Government needed a dictator. Of course it was not for this, but in spite of it, that I have given you com-

mand. Only those generals who gain successes can set up dictators. What I now ask of you is military successes, and I will risk the dictatorship. The Government will support you to the utmost of its ability, which is neither more nor less than it has done and will do for all commanders. I much fear that the spirit which you have aided to infuse into the army, of criticising their commander and withholding confidence in him, will now turn upon you. I shall assist you, so far as I can, to put it down. Neither you, nor Napoleon, if he were alive, can get any good out of an army while such a spirit prevails in it. And now beware of rashness. Beware of rashness, but with energy and sleepless vigilance go forward and give us victories."

This letter has, in my judgment, no parallel. The mistaken magnanimity is almost equal to the prophecy :

"I much fear that the spirit which you have aided to infuse into the army, of criticising their command and withholding confidence in him, will now turn upon you."

Chancellorsville was the fulfillment.

XII.

MR. LINCOLN was a statesman. The great stumbling-block — the great obstruction — in Lincoln's way, and in the way of thousands, was the old doctrine of States Rights.

This doctrine was first established to protect slavery. It was clung to to protect the inter-State

slave trade. It became sacred in connection with the Fugitive Slave Law, and it was finally used as the corner-stone of Secession.

This doctrine was never appealed to in defence of the right — always in support of the wrong. For many years politicians upon both sides of this question endeavored to express the exact relations existing between the Federal Government and the States, and I know of no one who succeeded, except Lincoln. In his message of 1861, delivered on July the 4th, the definition is given, and it is perfect:

"Whatever concerns the whole should be confided to the whole — to the General Government. Whatever concerns only the State should be left exclusively to the State."

When that definition is realized in practice, this country becomes a Nation. Then we shall know that the first allegiance of the citizen is not to his State, but to the Republic, and that the first duty of the Republic is to protect the citizen, not only when in other lands, but at home, and that this duty cannot be discharged by delegating it to the States.

Lincoln believed in the sovereignty of the people — in the supremacy of the Nation — in the territorial integrity of the Republic.

XIII.

A GREAT actor can be known only when he has assumed the principal character in a great drama. Possibly the greatest actors have never appeared, and it may be that the greatest soldiers have lived the lives of perfect peace. Lincoln assumed the leading part in the greatest drama ever enacted upon the stage of this continent.

His criticisms of military movements, his correspondence with his generals and others on the conduct of the war, show that he was at all times master of the situation — that he was a natural strategist, that he appreciated the difficulties and advantages of every kind, and that in "the still and mental" field of war he stood the peer of any man beneath the flag.

Had McClellan followed his advice, he would have taken Richmond.

Had Hooker acted in accordance with his suggestions, Chancellorsville would have been a victory for the Nation.

Lincoln's political prophecies were all fulfilled.

We know now that he not only stood at the top, but that he occupied the centre, from first to last,

and that he did this by reason of his intelligence, his humor, his philosophy, his courage and his patriotism.

In passion's storm he stood, unmoved, patient, just and candid. In his brain there was no cloud, and in his heart no hate. He longed to save the South as well as North, to see the Nation one and free.

He lived until the end was known.

He lived until the Confederacy was dead — until Lee surrendered, until Davis fled, until the doors of Libby Prison were opened, until the Republic was supreme.

He lived until Lincoln and Liberty were united forever.

He lived to cross the desert — to reach the palms of victory — to hear the murmured music of the welcome waves.

He lived until all loyal hearts were his — until the history of his deeds made music in the souls of men — until he knew that on Columbia's Calendar of worth and fame his name stood first.

He lived until there remained nothing for him to do as great as he had done.

What he did was worth living for, worth dying for.

He lived until he stood in the midst of universal

Joy, beneath the outstretched wings of Peace — the foremost man in all the world.

And then the horror came. Night fell on noon. The Savior of the Republic, the breaker of chains, the liberator of millions, he who had "assured freedom to the free," was dead.

Upon his brow Fame placed the immortal wreath, and for the first time in the history of the world a Nation bowed and wept.

The memory of Lincoln is the strongest, tenderest tie that binds all hearts together now, and holds all States beneath a Nation's flag.

XIV.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN — strange mingling of mirth and tears, of the tragic and grotesque, of cap and crown, of Socrates and Democritus, of Æsop and Marcus Aurelius, of all that is gentle and just, humorous and honest, merciful, wise, laughable, lovable and divine, and all consecrated to the use of man; while through all, and over all, were an overwhelming sense of obligation, of chivalric loyalty to truth, and upon all, the shadow of the tragic end.

Nearly all the great historic characters are impos-

sible monsters, disproportioned by flattery, or by calumny deformed. We know nothing of their peculiarities, or nothing but their peculiarities. About these oaks there clings none of the earth of humanity.

Washington is now only a steel engraving. About the real man who lived and loved and hated and schemed, we know but little. The glass through which we look at him is of such high magnifying power that the features are exceedingly indistinct.

Hundreds of people are now engaged in smoothing out the lines of Lincoln's face — forcing all features to the common mould — so that he may be known, not as he really was, but, according to their poor standard, as he should have been.

Lincoln was not a type. He stands alone — no ancestors, no fellows, and no successors.

He had the advantage of living in a new country, of social equality, of personal freedom, of seeing in the horizon of his future the perpetual star of hope. He preserved his individuality and his self-respect. He knew and mingled with men of every kind; and, after all, men are the best books. He became acquainted with the ambitions and hopes of the heart, the means used to accomplish ends, the

springs of action and the seeds of thought. He was familiar with nature, with actual things, with common facts. He loved and appreciated the poem of the year, the drama of the seasons.

In a new country a man must possess at least three virtues — honesty, courage and generosity. In cultivated society, cultivation is often more important than soil. A well-executed counterfeit passes more readily than a blurred genuine. It is necessary only to observe the unwritten laws of society — to be honest enough to keep out of prison, and generous enough to subscribe in public — where the subscription can be defended as an investment.

In a new country, character is essential; in the old, reputation is sufficient. In the new, they find what a man really is; in the old, he generally passes for what he resembles. People separated only by distance are much nearer together, than those divided by the walls of caste.

It is no advantage to live in a great city, where poverty degrades and failure brings despair. The fields are lovelier than paved streets, and the great forests than walls of brick. Oaks and elms are more poetic than steeples and chimneys.

In the country is the idea of home. There you

see the rising and setting sun; you become acquainted with the stars and clouds. The constellations are your friends. You hear the rain on the roof and listen to the rhythmic sighing of the winds. You are thrilled by the resurrection called Spring, touched and saddened by Autumn—the grace and poetry of death. Every field is a picture, a landscape; every landscape a poem; every flower a tender thought, and every forest a fairy-land. In the country you preserve your identity—your personality. There you are an aggregation of atoms, but in the city you are only an atom of an aggregation.

In the country you keep your cheek close to the breast of Nature. You are calmed and ennobled by the space, the amplitude and scope of earth and sky—by the constancy of the stars.

Lincoln never finished his education. To the night of his death he was a pupil, a learner, an inquirer, a seeker after knowledge. You have no idea how many men are spoiled by what is called education. For the most part, colleges are places where pebbles are polished and diamonds are dimmed. If Shakespeare had graduated at Oxford, he might have been a quibbling attorney, or a hypocritical parson.

Lincoln was a great lawyer. There is nothing shrewder in this world than intelligent honesty. Perfect candor is sword and shield.

He understood the nature of man. As a lawyer he endeavored to get at the truth, at the very heart of a case. He was not willing even to deceive himself. No matter what his interest said, what his passion demanded, he was great enough to find the truth and strong enough to pronounce judgment against his own desires.

Lincoln was a many-sided man, acquainted with smiles and tears, complex in brain, single in heart, direct as light; and his words, candid as mirrors, gave the perfect image of his thought. He was never afraid to ask—never too dignified to admit that he did not know. No man had keener wit, or kinder humor.

It may be that humor is the pilot of reason. People without humor drift unconsciously into absurdity. Humor sees the other side—stands in the mind like a spectator, a good-natured critic, and gives its opinion before judgment is reached. Humor goes with good nature, and good nature is the climate of reason. In anger, reason abdicates and malice extinguishes the torch. Such was the humor

of Lincoln that he could tell even unpleasant truths as charmingly as most men can tell the things we wish to hear.

He was not solemn. Solemnity is a mask worn by ignorance and hypocrisy — it is the preface, prologue, and index to the cunning or the stupid.

He was natural in his life and thought — master of the story-teller's art, in illustration apt, in application perfect, liberal in speech, shocking Pharisees and prudes, using any word that wit could disinfect.

He was a logician. His logic shed light. In its presence the obscure became luminous, and the most complex and intricate political and metaphysical knots seemed to untie themselves. Logic is the necessary product of intelligence and sincerity. It cannot be learned. It is the child of a clear head and a good heart.

Lincoln was candid, and with candor often deceived the deceitful. He had intellect without arrogance, genius without pride, and religion without cant — that is to say, without bigotry and without deceit.

He was an orator — clear, sincere, natural. He did not pretend. He did not say what he thought others thought, but what he thought.

If you wish to be sublime you must be natural—you must keep close to the grass. You must sit by the fireside of the heart; above the clouds it is too cold. You must be simple in your speech; too much polish suggests insincerity.

The great orator idealizes the real, transfigures the common, makes even the inanimate throb and thrill, fills the gallery of the imagination with statues and pictures perfect in form and color, brings to light the gold hoarded by memory the miser, shows the glittering coin to the spendthrift hope, enriches the brain, ennobles the heart, and quickens the conscience. Between his lips words bud and blossom.

If you wish to know the difference between an orator and an elocutionist—between what is felt and what is said—between what the heart and brain can do together and what the brain can do alone—read Lincoln's wondrous speech at Gettysburg, and then the oration of Edward Everett.

The speech of Lincoln will never be forgotten. It will live until languages are dead and lips are dust. The oration of Everett will never be read.

The elocutionists believe in the virtue of voice, the sublimity of syntax, the majesty of long sentences, and the genius of gesture.

The orator loves the real, the simple, the natural. He places the thought above all. He knows that the greatest ideas should be expressed in the shortest words — that the greatest statues need the least drapery.

Lincoln was an immense personality — firm but not obstinate. Obstinacy is egotism — firmness, heroism. He influenced others without effort, unconsciously; and they submitted to him as men submit to nature — unconsciously. He was severe with himself, and for that reason lenient with others.

He appeared to apologize for being kinder than his fellows.

He did merciful things as stealthily as others committed crimes.

Almost ashamed of tenderness, he said and did the noblest words and deeds with that charming confusion, that awkwardness, that is the perfect grace of modesty.

As a noble man, wishing to pay a small debt to a poor neighbor, reluctantly offers a hundred-dollar bill and asks for change, fearing that he may be suspected either of making a display of wealth or a pretence of payment, so Lincoln hesitated to show his wealth of goodness, even to the best he knew.

A great man stooping, not wishing to make his fellows feel that they were small or mean.

By his candor, by his kindness, by his perfect freedom from restraint, by saying what he thought, and saying it absolutely in his own way, he made it not only possible, but popular, to be natural. He was the enemy of mock solemnity, of the stupidly respectable, of the cold and formal.

He wore no official robes either on his body or his soul. He never pretended to be more or less, or other, or different, from what he really was.

He had the unconscious naturalness of Nature's self.

He built upon the rock. The foundation was secure and broad. The structure was a pyramid, narrowing as it rose. Through days and nights of sorrow, through years of grief and pain, with unswerving purpose, "with malice towards none, with charity for all," with infinite patience, with unclouded vision, he hoped and toiled. Stone after stone was laid, until at last the Proclamation found its place. On that the Goddess stands.

He knew others, because perfectly acquainted with himself. He cared nothing for place, but everything for principle; little for money, but every-

thing for independence. Where no principle was involved, easily swayed — willing to go slowly, if in the right direction — sometimes willing to stop; but he would not go back, and he would not go wrong.

He was willing to wait. He knew that the event was not waiting, and that fate was not the fool of chance. He knew that slavery had defenders, but no defence, and that they who attack the right must wound themselves.

He was neither tyrant nor slave. He neither knelt nor scorned.

With him, men were neither great nor small — they were right or wrong.

Through manners, clothes, titles, rags and race he saw the real — that which is. Beyond accident, policy, compromise and war he saw the end.

He was patient as Destiny, whose undecipherable hieroglyphs were so deeply graven on his sad and tragic face.

Nothing discloses real character like the use of power. It is easy for the weak to be gentle. Most people can bear adversity. But if you wish to know what a man really is, give him power. This is the supreme test. It is the glory of Lincoln that, having almost absolute power, he never abused it, except on the side of mercy.

Wealth could not purchase, power could not awe, this divine, this loving man.

He knew no fear except the fear of doing wrong. Hating slavery, pitying the master — seeking to conquer, not persons, but prejudices — he was the embodiment of the self-denial, the courage, the hope and the nobility of a Nation.

He spoke not to inflame, not to upbraid, but to convince.

He raised his hands, not to strike, but in benediction.

He longed to pardon.

He loved to see the pearls of joy on the cheeks of a wife whose husband he had rescued from death.

Lincoln was the grandest figure of the fiercest civil war. He is the gentlest memory of our world.

VOLTAIRE.

VOLTAIRE.

VOLTAIRE.

I.

THE infidels of one age have often been the aureoled saints of the next.

The destroyers of the old are the creators of the new.

As time sweeps on the old passes away and the new in its turn becomes old.

There is in the intellectual world, as in the physical, decay and growth, and ever by the grave of buried age stand youth and joy.

The history of intellectual progress is written in the lives of infidels.

Political rights have been preserved by traitors, the liberty of mind by heretics.

To attack the king was treason; to dispute the priest was blasphemy.

For many centuries the sword and cross were

allies. Together they attacked the rights of man. They defended each other.

The throne and altar were twins—two vultures from the same egg.

James I. said: "No bishop, no king." He might have added: "No cross, no crown." The king owned the bodies of men; the priest, the souls. One lived on taxes collected by force, the other on alms collected by fear—both robbers, both beggars.

These robbers and these beggars controlled two worlds. The king made laws, the priest made creeds. Both obtained their authority from God, both were the agents of the Infinite.

With bowed backs the people carried the burdens of one, and with wonder's open mouth received the dogmas of the other.

If the people aspired to be free, they were crushed by the king, and every priest was a Herod who slaughtered the children of the brain.

The king ruled by force, the priest by fear, and both by both.

The king said to the people: "God made you peasants, and He made me king; He made you to labor, and me to enjoy; He made rags and hovels for you, robes and palaces for me. He made you to

obey, and me to command. Such is the justice of God."

And the priest said: "God made you ignorant and vile; He made me holy and wise; you are the sheep, I am the shepherd; your fleeces belong to me. If you do not obey me here, God will punish you now and torment you forever in another world. Such is the mercy of God."

"You must not reason. Reason is a rebel. You must not contradict—contradiction is born of egotism; you must believe. He that hath ears to hear let him hear." Heaven was a question of ears.

Fortunately for us, there have been traitors and there have been heretics, blasphemers, thinkers, investigators, lovers of liberty, men of genius who have given their lives to better the condition of their fellow-men.

It may be well enough here to ask the question: What is greatness?

A great man adds to the sum of knowledge, extends the horizon of thought, releases souls from the Bastile of fear, crosses unknown and mysterious seas, gives new islands and new continents to the domain of thought, new constellations to the firmament of mind. A great man does not seek applause

or place ; he seeks for truth ; he seeks the road to happiness, and what he ascertains he gives to others.

A great man throws pearls before swine, and the swine are sometimes changed to men. If the great had always kept their pearls, vast multitudes would be barbarians now.

A great man is a torch in the darkness, a beacon in superstition's night, an inspiration and a prophecy.

Greatness is not the gift of majorities ; it cannot be thrust upon any man ; men cannot give it to another ; they can give place and power, but not greatness.

The place does not make the man, nor the sceptre the king. Greatness is from within.

The great men are the heroes who have freed the bodies of men ; they are the philosophers and thinkers who have given liberty to the soul ; they are the poets who have transfigured the common and filled the lives of many millions with love and song.

They are the artists who have covered the bare walls of weary life with the triumphs of genius.

They are the heroes who have slain the monsters of ignorance and fear, who have outgazed the Gorgon and driven the cruel gods from their thrones.

They are the inventors, the discoverers, the great

mechanics, the kings of the useful who have civilized this world.

At the head of this heroic army, foremost of all, stands Voltaire, whose memory we are honoring to-night.

Voltaire! a name that excites the admiration of men, the malignity of priests. Pronounce that name in the presence of a clergyman, and you will find that you have made a declaration of war. Pronounce that name, and from the face of the priest the mask of meekness will fall, and from the mouth of forgiveness will pour a Niagara of vituperation and calumny. And yet Voltaire was the greatest man of his century, and did more to free the human race than any other of the sons of men.

On Sunday, the 21st of November, 1694, a babe was born—a babe so exceedingly frail that the breath hesitated about remaining, and the parents had him baptized as soon as possible. They were anxious to save the soul of this babe, and they knew that if death came before baptism the child would be doomed to an eternity of pain. They knew that God despised an unsprinkled child. The priest who, with a few drops of water, gave the name of Francois-Marie Arouet to this babe and saved his soul—little thought that before him, wrapped in

many folds, weakly wailing, scarcely breathing, was the one destined to tear from the white throat of Liberty the cruel, murderous claws of the "Triumphant Beast."

When Voltaire came to this "great stage of fools," his country had been Christianized—not civilized—for about fourteen hundred years. For a thousand years the religion of peace and good-will had been supreme. The laws had been given by Christian kings, and sanctioned by "wise and holy men."

Under the benign reign of universal love, every court had its chamber of torture, and every priest relied on the thumb-screw and rack.

Such had been the success of the blessed gospel that every science was an outcast.

To speak your honest thoughts, to teach your fellow-men, to investigate for yourself, to seek the truth, these were all crimes, and the "holy-mother church" pursued the criminals with sword and flame.

The believers in a God of love—an infinite father—punished hundreds of offences with torture and death. Suspected persons were tortured to make them confess. Convicted persons were tortured to make them give the names of their accomplices. Under the leadership of the church, cruelty had become the only reforming power.

In this blessed year, 1694, all authors were at the mercy of king and priest. The most of them were cast into prisons, impoverished by fines and costs, exiled or executed.

The little time that hangmen could snatch from professional duties was occupied in burning books.

The courts of justice were traps, in which the innocent were caught. The judges were almost as malicious and cruel as though they had been bishops or saints. There was no trial by jury, and the rules of evidence allowed the conviction of the supposed criminal by the proof of suspicion or hearsay.

The witnesses, being liable to be tortured, generally told what the judges wished to hear.

The supernatural and the miraculous controlled the world. Everything was explained, but nothing was understood. The church was at the head. The sick bought from monks little amulets of consecrated paper. They did not send for a doctor, but for a priest, and the priest sold the diseased and the dying these magical amulets. These little pieces of paper with the help of some saint would cure diseases of every kind. If you would put one in a cradle, it would keep the child from being bewitched. If you would put one in the barn, the rats would not

eat your corn. If you would keep one in the house, evil spirits would not enter your doors, and if you buried them in the fields, you would have good weather, the frost would be delayed, rain would come when needed, and abundant crops would bless your labor. The church insisted that all diseases could be cured in the name of God, and that these cures could be effected by prayers, exorcism, by touching bones of saints, pieces of the true cross; by being sprinkled with holy water or with sanctified salt, or touched with magical oil.

In that day the dead saints were the best physicians; St. Valentine cured the epilepsy; St. Gervasius was exceedingly good for rheumatism; St. Michael for cancer; St. Judas for coughs and colds; St. Ovidius restored the hearing; St. Sebastian was good for the bites of snakes and the stings of poisonous insects; St. Apollonia for toothache; St. Clara for any trouble with the eyes; and St. Hubert for hydrophobia. It was known that doctors reduced the revenues of the church; that was enough—science was the enemy of religion.

The church thought that the air was filled with devils; that every sinner was a kind of tenement house inhabited by evil spirits; that angels were on

one side of men and evil spirits on the other, and that God would, when the subscriptions and donations justified the effort, drive the evil spirits from the field.

Satan had power over the air; consequently he controlled the frost, the mildew, the lightning and the flood; and the principal business of the church was with bells, and holy water, and incense, and crosses, to defeat the machinations of that prince of the power of the air.

Great reliance was placed upon the bells; they were sprinkled with holy water, and their clangor cleared the air of imps and fiends. And bells also protected the people from storms and lightning. In that day the church used to anathematize insects. Suits were commenced against rats, and judgment rendered. Every monastery had its master magician, who sold incense and salt and tapers and consecrated palms and relics. Every science was regarded as an enemy; every fact held the creed of the church in scorn. Investigators were regarded as dangerous; thinkers were traitors, and the church exerted its vast power to prevent the intellectual progress of man.

There was no real liberty, no real education, no

real philosophy, no real science — nothing but credulity and superstition. The world was under the control of Satan and the church.

The church firmly believed in the existence of witches and devils and fiends. In this way the church had every enemy within her power. It simply had to charge him with being a wizard, of holding communications with devils, and the ignorant mob were ready to tear him to pieces. So prevalent was this belief, this belief in the supernatural, that the poor people were finally driven to make the best possible terms they could with the spirit of evil. This frightful doctrine filled every friend with suspicion of his friend; it made the husband denounce the wife, children their parents, parents their children. It destroyed the amenities of humanity; it did away with justice in courts; it broke the bond of friendship; it filled with poison the golden cup of life; it turned earth into a very perdition peopled with abominable, malicious and hideous fiends. Such was the result of a belief in the supernatural; such was the result of giving up the evidence of their own senses and relying upon dreams, visions and fears. Such was the result of the attack upon the human reason; such the result of de-

pending on the imagination, on the supernatural; such the result of living in this world for another; of depending upon priests instead of upon ourselves. The Protestants vied with Catholics; Luther stood side by side with the priests he had deserted in promoting this belief in devils and fiends. To the Catholic every Protestant was possessed by a devil; to the Protestant every Catholic was the home of a fiend. All order, all regular succession of causes and effects were known no more; the natural ceased to exist; the learned and the ignorant were on a level. The priest was caught in the net he had spread for the peasant, and Christendom became a vast madhouse, with the insane for keepers.

When Voltaire was born the church ruled and owned France. It was a period of almost universal corruption. The priests were mostly libertines, the judges cruel and venal. The royal palace was a house of prostitution. The nobles were heartless, proud, arrogant and cruel to the last degree. The common people were treated as beasts. It took the church a thousand years to bring about this happy condition of things.

The seeds of the Revolution unconsciously were being scattered by every noble and by every priest.

They were germinating slowly in the hearts of the wretched; they were being watered by the tears of agony; blows began to bear interest. There was a faint longing for blood. Workmen, blackened by the sun, bowed by labor, deformed by want, looked at the white throats of scornful ladies and thought about cutting them.

In those days witnesses were cross-examined with instruments of torture; the church was the arsenal of superstition; miracles, relics, angels and devils were as common as lies.

In order to appreciate a great man we must know his surroundings. We must understand the scope of the drama in which he played — the part he acted, and we must also know his audience.

In England George I. was disporting with the "May-pole" and "Elephant," and then George II., jealous and choleric, hating the English and their language, making, however, an excellent image or idol before whom the English were glad to bow — snobbery triumphant — the criminal code getting bloodier every day — 223 offences punishable with death — the prisons filled and the scaffolds crowded — efforts on every hand to repress the ambition of men to be men — the church relying on supersti-

tion and ceremony to make men good—and the state dependent on the whip, the rope and axe to make men patriotic.

In Spain the Inquisition in full control—all the instruments of torture used to prevent the development of the mind, Spain, that had driven out the Jews, that is to say, her talent; that had driven out the Moors, that is to say, her taste and her industry, was still endeavoring by all religious means to reduce the land to the imbecility of the true faith.

In Portugal they were burning women and children for having eaten meat on a holy day, and this to please the most merciful God.

In Italy the nation prostrate, covered with swarms of cardinals and bishops and priests and monks and nuns and every representative of holy sloth. The Inquisition there also — while hands that were clasped in prayer or stretched for alms, grasped with eagerness and joy the lever of the rack, or gathered fagots for the holy flame.

In Germany they were burning men and women charged with having made a compact with the enemy of man.

And in our own fair land, persecuting Quakers, stealing men and women from another shore, steal-

ing children from their mother's breasts, and paying labor with the cruel lash.

Superstition ruled the world!

There is but one use for law, but one excuse for government—the preservation of liberty—to give to each man his own, to secure to the farmer what he produces from the soil, the mechanic what he invents and makes, to the artist what he creates, to the thinker the right to express his thoughts. Liberty is the breath of progress.

In France, the people were the sport of a king's caprice. Everywhere was the shadow of the Bastile. It fell upon the sunniest field, upon the happiest home. With the king walked the headsman; back of the throne was the chamber of torture. The Church appealed to the rack, and Faith relied on the fagot. Science was an outcast, and Philosophy, so-called, was the pander of superstition.

Nobles and priests were sacred. Peasants were vermin. Idleness sat at the banquet, and Industry gathered the crumbs and the crusts.

II.

The Days of Youth.

VOLTAIRE was of the people. In the language of that day, he had no ancestors. His real name was Francois-Marie Arouet. His mother was Marguerite d'Aumard. This mother died when he was seven years of age. He had an elder brother, Armand, who was a devotee, very religious and exceedingly disagreeable. This brother used to present offerings to the church, hoping to make amends for the unbelief of his brother. So far as we know, none of his ancestors were literary people.

The Arouets had never written a line. The Abbe de Chaulieu was his godfather, and, although an abbe, was a Deist who cared nothing about religion except in connection with his salary. Voltaire's father wanted to make a lawyer of him, but he had no taste for law. At the age of ten he entered the college of Louis Le Grand. This was a Jesuit school, and here he remained for seven years, leaving at seventeen, and never attending any other

school. According to Voltaire, he learned nothing at this school but a little Greek, a good deal of Latin and a vast amount of nonsense.

In this college of Louis Le Grand they did not teach geography, history, mathematics or any science. This was a Catholic institution, controlled by the Jesuits. In that day the religion was defended, was protected or supported by the state. Behind the entire creed were the bayonet, the axe, the wheel, the fagot and the torture chamber.

While Voltaire was attending the college of Louis Le Grand the soldiers of the king were hunting Protestants in the mountains of Cevennes for magistrates to hang on gibbets, to put to torture, to break on the wheel, or to burn at the stake.

At seventeen Voltaire determined to devote his life to literature. The father said, speaking of his two sons Armand and Francois, "I have a pair of fools for sons, one in verse and the other in prose."

In 1713, Voltaire, in a small way, became a diplomat. He went to The Hague attached to the French minister, and there he fell in love. The girl's mother objected. Voltaire sent his clothes to the young lady that she might visit him. Everything was discovered and he was dismissed. To this girl

he wrote a letter, and in it you will find the key note of Voltaire: "Do not expose yourself to the fury of your mother. You know what she is capable of. You have experienced it too well. Dissemble; it is your only chance. Tell her that you have forgotten me, that you hate me; then after telling her, love me all the more."

On account of this episode Voltaire was formally disinherited by his father. The father procured an order of arrest and gave his son the choice of going to prison or beyond the seas. He finally consented to become a lawyer, and says: "I have already been a week at work in the office of a solicitor learning the trade of a pettifogger."

About this time he competed for a prize, writing a poem on the king's generosity in building the new choir in the Cathedral Notre Dame. He did not win it. After being with the solicitor a little while, he hated the law, began to write poetry and the outlines of tragedy. Great questions were then agitating the public mind, questions that throw a flood of light upon that epoch.

In 1552 Dr. Baius took it into his head to sustain a number of propositions touching predestination to the prejudice of the doctrine of free will. The Cor-

delian monks selected seventy-six of the propositions and denounced them to the Pope as heretical, and from the Pope obtained what was called a Bull. This Bull contained a doubtful passage, the meaning of which was dependent upon the position of a comma. The friends of Dr. Baius wrote to Rome to find where the comma ought to be placed. Rome, busy with other matter, sent as an answer a copy of the Bull in which the doubtful sentence was left without any comma. So the dispute continued.

Then there was the great controversy between the Jansenists and Molinists. Molini was a Spanish Jesuit, who sustained the doctrine of free will with a subtlety of his own, "man's will is free, but God sees exactly how he will use it." The Presbyterians of our country are still wrestling with this important absurdity.

Jansenius was a French Jesuit who carried the doctrine of predestination to the extreme, asserting that God commands things that are impossible, and that Christ did not die for all.

In 1641 the Jesuits obtained a Bull condemning five propositions of Jansenius. The Jansenists thereupon denied that the five propositions — or any of them — were found in the works of Jansenius.

This question of Jansenism and Molinism occupied France for about two hundred years.

In Voltaire's time the question had finally dwindled down to whether the five propositions condemned by the Papal Bull were in fact in the works of Jansenius. The Jansenists proved that the five propositions were not in his book, because a niece of Pascal had a diseased eye cured by the application of a thorn from the crown of Christ.

The Bull Unigenitus was launched in 1713, and then all the prisons were filled with Jansenists. This great question of predestination and free will, of free moral agency and accountability, and being saved by the grace of God, and damned for the glory of God, have occupied the mind of what we call the civilized world for many centuries. All these questions were argued pro and con through Switzerland; all of them in Holland for centuries; in Scotland and England and New England, and millions of people are still busy harmonizing fore-ordination and free will, necessity and morality, predestination and accountability.

Louis XIV. having died, the Regent took possession, and then the prisons were opened. The Regent called for a list of all persons then in the prisons

sent there at the will of the king. He found that, as to many prisoners, nobody knew any cause why they had been in prison. They had been forgotten. Many of the prisoners did not know themselves, and could not guess why they had been arrested. One Italian had been in the Bastile thirty-three years without ever knowing why. On his arrival in Paris, thirty-three years before, he was arrested and sent to prison. He had grown old. He had survived his family and friends. When the rest were liberated he asked to remain where he was, and lived there the rest of his life. The old prisoners were pardoned, but in a little while their places were taken by new ones.

At this time Voltaire was not interested in the great world—knew very little of religion or of government. He was busy writing poetry, busy thinking of comedies and tragedies. He was full of life. All his fancies were winged like moths.

He was charged with having written some cutting epigrams. He was exiled to Tulle, three hundred miles away. From this place he wrote in the true vein—"I am at a chateau, a place that would be the most agreeable in the world if I had not been exiled to it, and where there is nothing wanting for

my perfect happiness except the liberty of leaving. It would be delicious to remain, if I only were allowed to go."

At last the exile was allowed to return. Again he was arrested; this time sent to the Bastile, where he remained for nearly a year. While in prison he changed his name from Francois-Marie Arouet to Voltaire, and by that name he has since been known.

Voltaire, as full of life as summer is full of blossoms, giving his ideas upon all subjects at the expense of prince and king, was exiled to England. From sunny France he took his way to the mists and fogs of Albion. He became acquainted with the highest and the best in Britain. He met Pope, a most wonderful verbal mechanic, a maker of artificial flowers, very much like natural ones, except that they lack perfume and the seeds of suggestion. He made the acquaintance of Young, who wrote the "Night Thoughts;" Young, a fine old hypocrite with a virtuous imagination, a gentleman who electioneered with the king's mistress that he might be made a bishop. He became acquainted with Chesterfield—all manners, no man; with Thomson, author of "The Seasons," who loved to see the sun

rise in bed and visit the country in town; with Swift, whose poisoned arrows were then festering in the flesh of Mr. Bull—Swift, as wicked as he was witty, and as heartless as he was humorous—with Swift, a dean and a devil; with Congreve, whom Addison thought superior to Shakespeare, and who never wrote but one great line, "The cathedral looking tranquillity."

III.

The Morn of Manhood.

VOLTAIRE began to think, to doubt, to inquire. He studied the history of the church, of the creed. He found that the religion of his time rested on the inspiration of the Scriptures — the infallibility of the church — the dreams of insane hermits — the absurdities of the Fathers — the mistakes and falsehoods of saints — the hysteria of nuns — the cunning of priests and the stupidity of the people. He found that the Emperor Constantine, who lifted Christianity into power, murdered his wife Fausta and his eldest son Crispus, the same year that he convened the Council of Nice, to decide whether Christ was a man or the Son of God. The Council decided, in the year 325, that Christ was consubstantial with the Father. He found that the church was indebted to a husband who assassinated his wife — a father who murdered his son, for settling the vexed question of the divinity of the Savior. He found that Theodosius called a council at Constanti-

nople in 381, by which it was decided that the Holy Ghost proceeded from the Father — that Theodosius, the younger, assembled a council at Ephesus in 431, that declared the Virgin Mary to be the mother of God — that the Emperor Marcian called another council at Chalcedon in 451, that decided that Christ had two wills — that Pognatius called another in 680, that declared that Christ had two natures to go with his two wills — and that in 1274, at the council of Lyons, the important fact was found that the Holy Ghost "proceeded," not only from the Father, but also from the Son at the same time.

So, it took about 1,300 years to find out a few things that had been revealed by an infinite God to his infallible church.

Voltaire found that this insane creed had filled the world with cruelty and fear. He found that vestments were more sacred than virtues — that images and crosses — pieces of old bones and bits of wood were more precious than the rights and lives of men, and that the keepers of these relics were the enemies of the human race.

With all the energy of his nature — with every faculty of his mind — he attacked this "Triumphant Beast."

Voltaire was the apostle of common sense. He knew that there could have been no primitive or first language from which all other languages had been formed. He knew that every language had been influenced by the surroundings of the people. He knew that the language of snow and ice was not the language of palm and flower. He knew also that there had been no miracle in language. He knew that it was impossible that the story of the Tower of Babel should be true. He knew that everything in the whole world had been natural. He was the enemy of alchemy, not only in language but in science. One passage from him is enough to show his philosophy in this regard. He says: "To transmute iron into gold, two things are necessary: first, the annihilation of the iron; second, the creation of gold."

Voltaire gave us the philosophy of history.

Voltaire was a man of humor, of good nature, of cheerfulness. He despised with all his heart the philosophy of Calvin, the creed of the sombre, of the severe, of the unnatural. He pitied those who needed the aid of religion to be honest, to be cheerful. He had the courage to enjoy the present and the philosophy to bear what the future might bring.

And yet for more than a hundred and fifty years the Christian world has fought this man and has maligned his memory. In every Christian pulpit his name has been pronounced with scorn, and every pulpit has been an arsenal of slander. He is one man of whom no orthodox minister has ever told the truth. He has been denounced equally by Catholics and Protestants.

Priests and ministers, bishops and exhorters, presiding elders and popes have filled the world with slanders, with calumnies about Voltaire. I am amazed that ministers will not or cannot tell the truth about an enemy of the church. As a matter of fact, for more than one thousand years, almost every pulpit has been a mint in which slanders have been coined.

Voltaire made up his mind to destroy the superstition of his time.

He fought with every weapon that genius could devise or use. He was the greatest of all caricaturists, and he used this wonderful gift without mercy. For pure crystallized wit, he had no equal. The art of flattery was carried by him to the height of an exact science. He knew and practiced every subterfuge. He fought the army of hypocrisy and pretence, the army of faith and falsehood.

Voltaire was annoyed by the meaner and baser spirits of his time, by the cringers and crawlers, by the fawners and pretenders, by those who wished to gain the favor of priests, the patronage of nobles. Sometimes he allowed himself to be annoyed by these wretches; sometimes he attacked them. And, but for these attacks, long ago they would have been forgotten. In the amber of his genius Voltaire preserved these insects, these tarantulas, these scorpions.

It is fashionable to say that he was not profound. This is because he was not stupid. In the presence of absurdity he laughed, and was called irreverent. He thought God would not damn even a priest forever — this was regarded as blasphemy. He endeavored to prevent Christians from murdering each other, and did what he could to civilize the disciples of Christ. Had he founded a sect, obtained control of some country, and burned a few heretics at slow fires, he would have won the admiration, respect and love of the Christian world. Had he only pretended to believe all the fables of antiquity, had he mumbled Latin prayers, counted beads, crossed himself, devoured now and then the flesh of God, and carried fagots to the feet of Philosophy in the name of

Christ, he might have been in heaven this moment, enjoying a sight of the damned.

If he had only adopted the creed of his time — if he had asserted that a God of infinite power and mercy had created millions and billions of human beings to suffer eternal pain, and all for the sake of his glorious justice — that he had given his power of attorney to a cunning and cruel Italian Pope, authorizing him to save the soul of his mistress and send honest wives to hell — if he had given to the nostrils of this God the odor of burning flesh — the incense of the fagot — if he had filled his ears with the shrieks of the tortured — the music of the rack, he would now be known as Saint Voltaire.

For many years this restless man filled Europe with the product of his brain. Essays, epigrams, epics, comedies, tragedies, histories, poems, novels, representing every phase and every faculty of the human mind. At the same time engrossed in business, full of speculation, making money like a millionaire, busy with the gossip of courts, and even with the scandals of priests. At the same time alive to all the discoveries of science and the theories of philosophers, and in this Babel never forgetting for one moment to assail the monster of superstition.

Sleeping and waking he hated the church. With the eyes of Argus he watched, and with the arms of Briareus he struck. For sixty years he waged continuous and unrelenting war, sometimes in the open field, sometimes striking from the hedges of opportunity — taking care during all this time to remain independent of all men. He was in the highest sense successful. He lived like a prince, became one of the powers of Europe, and in him, for the first time, literature was crowned.

It has been claimed by the Christian critics that Voltaire was irreverent; that he examined sacred things without solemnity; that he refused to remove his shoes in the presence of the Burning Bush; that he smiled at the geology of Moses, the astronomical ideas of Joshua, and that the biography of Jonah filled him with laughter. They say that these stories, these sacred impossibilities, these inspired falsehoods, should be read and studied with a believing mind in humbleness of spirit; that they should be examined prayerfully, asking God at the same time to give us strength to triumph over the conclusions of our reason. These critics imagine that a falsehood can be old enough to be venerable, and that to stand covered in its presence is the act of an

irreverent scoffer. Voltaire approached the mythology of the Jews precisely as he did the mythology of the Greeks and Romans, or the mythology of the Chinese or the Iroquois Indians. There is nothing in this world too sacred to be investigated, to be understood. The philosopher does not hide. Secrecy is not the friend of truth. No man should be reverent at the expense of his reason. Nothing should be worshiped until the reason has been convinced that it is worthy of worship.

Against all miracles, against all holy superstition, against sacred mistakes, he shot the arrows of ridicule.

These arrows, winged by fancy, sharpened by wit, poisoned by truth, always reached the centre.

It is claimed by many that anything, the best and holiest, can be ridiculed. As a matter of fact, he who attempts to ridicule the truth, ridicules himself. He becomes the food of his own laughter.

The mind of man is many-sided. Truth must be and is willing to be tested in every way, tested by all the senses.

But in what way can the absurdity of the "real presence" be answered, except by banter, by raillery, by ridicule, by persiflage? How are you going

to convince a man who believes that when he swallows the sacred wafer he has eaten the entire Trinity, and that a priest drinking a drop of wine has devoured the Infinite? How are you to reason with a man who believes that if any of the sacred wafers are left over they should be put in a secure place, so that mice should not eat God?

What effect will logic have upon a religious gentleman who firmly believes that a God of infinite compassion sent two bears to tear thirty or forty children in pieces for laughing at a bald-headed prophet?

How are such people to be answered? How can they be brought to a sense of their absurdity? They must feel in their flesh the arrows of ridicule.

So Voltaire has been called a mocker.

What did he mock? He mocked kings that were unjust; kings who cared nothing for the sufferings of their subjects. He mocked the titled fools of his day. He mocked the corruption of courts; the meanness, the tyranny and the brutality of judges. He mocked the absurd and cruel laws, the barbarous customs. He mocked popes and cardinals and bishops and priests, and all the hypocrites on the earth. He mocked historians who filled their books

with lies, and philosophers who defended superstition. He mocked the haters of liberty, the persecutors of their fellow-men. He mocked the arrogance, the cruelty, the impudence, and the unspeakable baseness of his time.

He has been blamed because he used the weapon of ridicule.

Hypocrisy has always hated laughter, and always will. Absurdity detests humor, and stupidity despises wit. Voltaire was the master of ridicule. He ridiculed the absurd, the impossible. He ridiculed the mythologies and the miracles, the stupid lives and lies of the saints. He found pretence and mendacity crowned by credulity. He found the ignorant many controlled by the cunning and cruel few. He found the historian, saturated with superstition, filling his volumes with the details of the impossible, and he found the scientists satisfied with "they say."

Voltaire had the instinct of the probable. He knew the law of average, the sea level; he had the idea of proportion, and so he ridiculed the mental monstrosities and deformities — the *non sequiturs* — of his day. Aristotle said women had more teeth than men. This was repeated again and again by the Catholic scientists of the eighteenth century.

Voltaire counted the teeth. The rest were satisfied with "they say."

Voltaire for many years, in spite of his surroundings, in spite of almost universal tyranny and oppression, was a believer in God and what he was pleased to call the religion of Nature. He attacked the creed of his time because it was dishonorable to his God. He thought of the Deity as a father, as the fountain of justice, intelligence and mercy, and the creed of the Catholic Church made him a monster of cruelty and stupidity. He attacked the Bible with all the weapons at his command. He assailed its geology, its astronomy, its ideas of justice, its laws and customs, its absurd and useless miracles, its foolish wonders, its ignorance on all subjects, its insane prophecies, its cruel threats and its extravagant promises.

At the same time he praised the God of nature, the God who gives us rain and light and food and flowers and health and happiness—who fills the world with youth and beauty.

Attacked on every side, he fought with every weapon that wit, logic, reason, scorn, contempt, laughter, pathos and indignation could sharpen, form, devise or use. He often apologized, and the

apology was an insult. He often recanted, and the recantation was a thousand times worse than the thing recanted. He took it back by giving more. In the name of eulogy he flayed his victim. In his praise there was poison. He often advanced by retreating, and asserted by retraction.

He did not intend to give priests the satisfaction of seeing him burn or suffer. Upon this very point of recanting he wrote:

"They say I must retract. Very willingly. I "will declare that Pascal is always right. That if St. "Luke and St. Mark contradict one another, it is "only another proof of the truth of religion to those "who know how to understand such things; and "that another lovely proof of religion is that it is "unintelligible. I will even avow that all priests "are gentle and disinterested; that Jesuits are hon-"est people; that monks are neither proud nor "given to intrigue, and that their odor is agreeable; "that the Holy Inquisition is the triumph of human-"ity and tolerance. In a word, I will say all that "may be desired of me, provided they leave me in "repose, and will not persecute a man who has done "harm to none."

He gave the best years of his wondrous life to

succor the oppressed, to shield the defenceless, to reverse infamous decrees, to rescue the innocent, to reform the laws of France, to do away with torture, to soften the hearts of priests, to enlighten judges, to instruct kings, to civilize the people, and to banish from the heart of man the love and lust of war.

You may think that I have said too much; that I have placed this man too high. Let me tell you what Goethe, the great German, said of this man:

"If you wish depth, genius, imagination, taste, "reason, sensibility, philosophy, elevation, original- "ity, nature, intellect, fancy, rectitude, facility, flexi- "bility, precision, art, abundance, variety, fertility, "warmth, magic, charm, grace, force, an eagle sweep "of vision, vast understanding, instruction rich, tone "excellent, urbanity, suavity, delicacy, correctness, "purity, clearness, eloquence, harmony, brilliancy, "rapidity, gaiety, pathos, sublimity and universality, "perfection indeed, behold Voltaire."

Even Carlyle, that old Scotch terrier, with the growl of a grizzly bear, who attacked shams, as I have sometimes thought, because he hated rivals, was forced to admit that Voltaire gave the death stab to modern superstition.

It is the duty of every man to destroy the superstitions of his time, and yet there are thousands of men and women, fathers and mothers, who repudiate with their whole hearts the creeds of superstition, and still allow their children to be taught these lies. They allow their imaginations to be poisoned with the dogma of eternal pain. They allow arrogant and ignorant parsons, meek and foolish teachers, to sow the seeds of barbarism in the minds of their children — seeds that will fill their lives with fear and pain. Nothing can be more important to a human being than to be free and to live without fear.

It is far better to be a mortal free man than an immortal slave.

Fathers and mothers should do their utmost to make their children free. They should teach them to doubt, to investigate, to inquire, and every father and mother should know that by the cradle of every child, as by the cradle of the infant Hercules, crawls the serpent of superstition.

IV.

The Scheme of Nature.

AT that time it was pretended by the believers in God that the plan, or the scheme of nature, was not cruel; that the lower was sacrificed for the benefit of the higher; that while life lived upon life, while animals lived upon each other, and while man was the king or sovereign of all, still the higher lived upon the lower. Consequently, a lower life was sacrificed that a higher life might exist. This reasoning satisfied many. Yet there were thousands that could not see why the lower should be sacrificed, or why all joy should be born of pain. But, since the construction of the microscope, since man has been allowed to look toward the infinitely small, as well as toward the infinitely great, he finds that our fathers were mistaken when they laid down the proposition that only the lower life was sacrificed for the sake of the higher.

Now we find that the lives of all visible animals are liable to be, and in countless cases are, destroyed by a far lower life; that man himself is destroyed by

the microbes, the bacilli, the infinitesimal. We find that for the sake of preserving the yellow fever germs millions and millions have died, and that whole nations have been decimated for the sake of the little beast that gives us the cholera. We have also found that there are animals, call them what you please, that live on the substance of the human heart, others that prefer the lungs, others again so delicate in their palate that they insist on devouring the optic nerve, and when they have destroyed the sight of one eye have sense enough to bore through the cartilage of the nose to attack the other. Thus we find the other side of this proposition. At first sight the lower seemed to be sacrificed for the sake of the higher, but on closer inspection the highest are sacrificed for the sake of the lowest.

Voltaire was, for a long time, a believer in the optimism of Pope — "All partial evil, universal good." This is a very fine philosophy for the fortunate. It suits the rich. It is flattering to kings and priests. It sounds well. It is a fine stone to throw at a beggar. It enables you to bear with great fortitude the misfortunes of others.

It is not the philosophy for those who suffer — for industry clothed in rags, for patriotism in prison, for

honesty in want, or for virtuous outcasts. It is a philosophy of a class, of a few, and of the few who are fortunate ; and, when misfortune overtakes them, this philosophy fades and withers.

In 1755 came the earthquake at Lisbon. This frightful disaster became an immense interrogation. The optimist was compelled to ask, "What was my God doing? Why did the Universal Father crusn to shapelessness thousands of his poor children, even at the moment when they were upon their knees returning thanks to him?"

What could be done with this horror? If earthquake there must be, why did it not occur in some uninhabited desert, on some wide waste of sea? This frightful fact changed the theology of Voltaire. He became convinced that this is not the best possible of all worlds. He became convinced that evil is evil here, now, and forever.

The Theist was silent. The earthquake denied the existence of God.

V.

His Humanity.

TOULOUSE was a favored town. It was rich in relics. The people were as ignorant as wooden images, but they had in their possession the dried bodies of seven apostles—the bones of many of the infants slain by Herod—part of a dress of the Virgin Mary, and lots of skulls and skeletons of the infallible idiots known as saints.

In this city the people celebrated every year with great joy two holy events: The expulsion of the Huguenots, and the blessed massacre of St. Bartholomew. The citizens of Toulouse had been educated and civilized by the church.

A few Protestants, mild because in the minority, lived among these jackals and tigers.

One of these Protestants was Jean Calas—a small dealer in dry goods. For forty years he had been in this business, and his character was without a stain. He was honest, kind and agreeable. He

had a wife and six children—four sons and two daughters. One of the sons became a Catholic. The eldest son, Marc Antoine, disliked his father's business and studied law. He could not be allowed to practice unless he became a Catholic. He tried to get his license by concealing that he was a Protestant. He was discovered — grew morose. Finally he became discouraged and committed suicide, by hanging himself one evening in his father's store.

The bigots of Toulouse started the story that his parents had killed him to prevent his becoming a Catholic.

On this frightful charge the father, mother, one son, a servant, and one guest at their house, were arrested.

The dead son was considered a martyr, the church taking possession of the body.

This happened in 1761.

There was what was called a trial. There was no evidence, not the slightest, except hearsay. All the facts were in favor of the accused.

The united strength of the defendants could not have done the deed.

Jean Calas was doomed to torture and to death upon the wheel. This was on the 9th of March,

1762, and the sentence was to be carried out the next day.

On the morning of the 10th the father was taken to the torture room. The executioner and his assistants were sworn on the cross to administer the torture according to the judgment of the court.

They bound him by the wrists to an iron ring in the stone wall four feet from the ground, and his feet to another ring in the floor. Then they shortened the ropes and chains until every joint in his arms and legs was dislocated. Then he was questioned. He declared that he was innocent. Then the ropes were again shortened until life fluttered in the torn body; but he remained firm.

This was called "the question ordinaire."

Again the magistrates exhorted the victim to confess, and again he refused, saying that there was nothing to confess.

Then came "the question extraordinaire."

Into the mouth of the victim was placed a horn holding three pints of water. In this way thirty pints of water were forced into the body of the sufferer. The pain was beyond description, and yet Jean Calas remained firm.

He was then carried to the scaffold in a tumbril.

He was bound to a wooden cross that lay on the scaffold. The executioner then took a bar of iron, broke each leg and each arm in two places, striking eleven blows in all. He was then left to die if he could. He lived for two hours, declaring his innocence to the last. He was slow to die, and so the executioner strangled him. Then his poor lacerated, bleeding and broken body was chained to a stake and burned.

All this was a spectacle — a festival for the savages of Toulouse. What would they have done if their hearts had not been softened by the glad tidings of great joy — peace on earth and good will to men?

But this was not all. The property of the family was confiscated; the son was released on condition that he become a Catholic; the servant if she would enter a convent. The two daughters were consigned to a convent, and the heart-broken widow was allowed to wander where she would.

Voltaire heard of this case. In a moment his soul was on fire. He took one of the sons under his roof. He wrote a history of the case. He corresponded with kings and queens, with chancellors and lawyers. If money was needed, he advanced

it. For years he filled Europe with the echoes of the groans of Jean Calas. He succeeded. The horrible judgment was annulled—the poor victim declared innocent and thousands of dollars raised to support the mother and family.

This was the work of Voltaire.

THE SIRVEN FAMILY.

Sirven, a Protestant, lived in Languedoc with his wife and three daughters. The housekeeper of the bishop wanted to make one of the daughters a Catholic.

The law allowed the bishop to take the child of Protestants from their parents for the sake of its soul. This little girl was so taken and placed in a convent. She ran away and came back to her parents. Her poor little body was covered with the marks of the convent whip.

"Suffer little children to come unto me."

The child was out of her mind—suddenly she disappeared, and a few days after her little body was found in a well, three miles from home.

The cry was raised that her folks had murdered her to keep her from becoming a Catholic.

This happened only a little way from the Christian City of Toulouse while Jean Calas was in prison. The Sirvens knew that a trial would end in conviction. They fled. In their absence they were convicted, their property confiscated, the parents sentenced to die by the hangman, the daughters to be under the gallows during the execution of their mother, and then to be exiled.

The family fled in the midst of winter; the married daughter gave birth to a child in the snows of the Alps; the mother died, and, at last reaching Switzerland, the father found himself without means of support.

They went to Voltaire. He espoused their cause. He took care of them, gave them the means to live, and labored to annul the sentence that had been pronounced against them for nine long and weary years. He appealed to kings for money, to Catharine II. of Russia, and to hundreds of others. He was successful. He said of this case: The Sirvens were tried and condemned in two hours in January, 1762, and now in January, 1772, after ten years of effort, they have been restored to their rights.

This was the work of Voltaire. Why should the worshipers of God hate the lovers of men?

THE ESPENASSE CASE.

Espenasse was a Protestant, of good estate. In 1740 he received into his house a Protestant clergyman, to whom he gave supper and lodging.

In a country where priests repeated the parable of the "Good Samaritan," this was a crime.

For this crime Espenasse was tried, convicted and sentenced to the galleys for life.

When he had been imprisoned for twenty-three years his case came to the knowledge of Voltaire, and he was, through the efforts of Voltaire, released and restored to his family.

This was the work of Voltaire. There is not time to tell of the case of General Lally, of the English General Byng, of the niece of Corneille, of the Jesuit Adam, of the writers, dramatists, actors, widows and orphans for whose benefit he gave his influence, his money and his time. But I will tell another case:

In 1765, at the town of Abbeville, an old wooden cross on a bridge had been mutilated—whittled with a knife—a terrible crime. Sticks, when crossing each other, were far more sacred than flesh and blood. Two young men were suspected—the Chevalier de la Barre and D'Etallonde. D'Etallonde fled to Prussia and enlisted as a common soldier.

La Barre remained and stood his trial.

He was convicted without the slightest evidence, and he and D'Etallonde were both sentenced:

First, to endure the torture, ordinary and extraordinary.

Second, to have their tongues torn out by the roots with pincers of iron.

Third, to have their right hands cut off at the door of the church.

Fourth, to be bound to stakes by chains of iron and burned to death by a slow fire.

"Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us."

Remembering this, the judges mitigated the sentence by providing that their heads should be cut off before their bodies were given to the flames.

The case was appealed to Paris; heard by a

court composed of twenty-five judges, learned in the law, and the judgment was confirmed.

The sentence was carried out on the first day of July, 1766.

When Voltaire heard of this judicial infamy he made up his mind to abandon France. He wished to leave forever a country where such cruelties were possible.

He wrote a pamphlet, giving the history of the case.

He ascertained the whereabouts of D'Etallonde, wrote in his behalf to the King of Prussia; got him released from the army; took him to his own house; kept him for a year and a half; saw that he was instructed in drawing, mathematics, engineering, and had at last the happiness of seeing him a captain of engineers in the army of Frederick the Great.

Such a man was Voltaire. He was the champion of the oppressed and the helpless. He was the Cæsar to whom the victims of church and state appealed. He stood for the intellect and heart of his time.

And yet for a hundred and fifty years those who love their enemies have exhausted the vocabulary

of hate, the ingenuity of malice and mendacity, in their efforts to save their stupid creeds from the genius of Voltaire.

From a great height he surveyed the world. His horizon was large. He had some vices—these he shared in common with priests—his virtues were his own.

He was in favor of universal education—of the development of the brain. The church despised him. He wished to put the knowledge of the whole world within the reach of all. Every priest was his enemy. He wished to drive from the gate of Eden the cherubim of superstition, so that the children of Adam might return and eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge. The church opposed this because it had the fruit of the tree of ignorance for sale.

He was one of the foremost friends of the Encyclopedia—of Diderot, and did all in his power to give information to all. So far as principles were concerned, he was the greatest lawyer of his time. I do not mean that he knew the terms and decisions, but that he clearly perceived not only what the law should be, but its application and administration. He understood the philosophy of evidence, the difference between suspicion and proof, between belief

and knowledge, and he did more to reform the laws of the kingdom and the abuses at courts than all the lawyers and statesmen of his time.

At school, he read and studied the works of Cicero—the lord of language—probably the greatest orator that has uttered speech, and the words of the Roman remained in his brain. He became, in spite of the spirit of caste, a believer in the equality of men. He said:

"Men are born equal."

"Let us respect virtue and merit."

"Let us have it in the heart that men are equal."

He was an abolitionist—the enemy of slavery in all its forms. He did not think that the color of one man gave him the right to steal from another man on account of that man's color. He was the friend of serf and peasant, and did what he could to protect animals, wives and children from the fury of those who loved their neighbors as themselves.

It was Voltaire who sowed the seeds of liberty in the heart and brain of Franklin, of Jefferson and Thomas Paine.

Pufendorf had taken the ground that slavery was, in part, founded on contract.

Voltaire said: "Show me the contract, and if it is

signed by the party to be the slave, I may believe you."

He thought it absurd that God should drown the fathers, and then come and die for the children. This is as good as the remark of Diderot: "If Christ had the power to defend himself from the Jews and refused to use it, he was guilty of suicide."

He had sense enough to know that the flame of the fagot does not enlighten the mind. He hated the cruel and pitied the victims of church and state. He was the friend of the unfortunate — the helper of the striving. He laughed at the pomp of kings — the pretensions of priests. He was a believer in the natural and abhorred with all his heart the miraculous and absurd.

Voltaire was not a saint. He was educated by the Jesuits. He was never troubled about the salvation of his soul. All the theological disputes excited his laughter, the creeds his pity, and the conduct of bigots his contempt. He was much better than a saint.

Most of the Christians in his day kept their religion not for every day use but for disaster, as ships carry life boats to be used only in the stress of storm.

Voltaire believed in the religion of humanity — of good and generous deeds. For many centuries the church had painted virtue so ugly, sour and cold, that vice was regarded as beautiful. Voltaire taught the beauty of the useful, the hatefulness and hideousness of superstition.

He was not the greatest of poets, or of dramatists, but he was the greatest man of his time, the greatest friend of freedom and the deadliest foe of superstition.

He did more to break the chains of superstition — to drive the phantoms of fear from the heart and brain, to destroy the authority of the church and to give liberty to the world than any other of the sons of men. In the highest, the holiest sense he was the most profoundly religious man of his time.

VI.

The Return.

AFTER an exile of twenty-seven years, occupying during all that time a first place in the civilized world, Voltaire returned to Paris. His journey was a triumphal march. He was received as a conqueror. The Academy, the Immortals, came to meet him — a compliment that had never been paid to royalty. His tragedy of "Irene" was performed. At the theatre he was crowned with laurel, covered with flowers; he was intoxicated with perfume and with incense of worship. He was the supreme French poet, standing above them all. Among the literary men of the world he stood first—a monarch by the divine right of genius. There were three mighty forces in France—the throne, the altar and Voltaire.

The king was the enemy of Voltaire. The court could have nothing to do with him. The church, malign and morose, was waiting for her revenge, and

yet, such was the reputation of this man—such the hold he had upon the people—that he became, in spite of Throne, in spite of Church, the idol of France.

He was an old man of eighty-four. He had been surrounded with the comforts, the luxuries of life. He was a man of great wealth, the richest writer that the world had known. Among the literary men of the earth he stood first. He was an intellectual king — one who had built his own throne and had woven the purple of his own power. He was a man of genius. The Catholic God had allowed him the appearance of success. His last years were filled with the intoxication of flattery — of almost worship. He stood at the summit of his age.

The priests became anxious. They began to fear that God would forget, in a multiplicity of business, to make a terrible example of Voltaire.

Towards the last of May, 1778, it was whispered in Paris that Voltaire was dying. Upon the fences of expectation gathered the unclean birds of superstition, impatiently waiting for their prey.

"Two days before his death, his nephew went to seek the Curé of Saint Sulpice and the Abbé Gautier, and brought them into his uncle's sick chamber.

'Ah, well!' said Voltaire, 'give them my compliments and my thanks.' The Abbé spoke some words to him, exhorting him to patience. The curé of Saint Sulpice then came forward, having announced himself, and asked of Voltaire, elevating his voice, if he acknowledged the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ. The sick man pushed one of his hands against the curé's coif, shoving him back and cried, turning abruptly to the other side, 'Let me die in peace.' The curé seemingly considered his person soiled and his coif dishonored by the touch of a philosopher. He made the nurse give him a little brushing and went out with the Abbé Gautier."

He expired, says Wagnière, on the 30th of May, 1778, at about a quarter-past eleven at night, with the most perfect tranquillity. A few minutes before his last breath he took the hand of Morand, his *valet de chambre*, who was watching by him, pressed it, and said: "Adieu, my dear Morand, I am gone." These were his last words. Like a peaceful river with green and shaded banks, he flowed without a murmur into the waveless sea, where life is rest.

From this death, so simple and serene, so kind, so philosophic and tender, so natural and peaceful; from these words, so utterly destitute of cant or

dramatic touch, all the frightful pictures, all the despairing utterances, have been drawn and made. From these materials, and from these alone, or rather, in spite of these facts, have been constructed by priests and clergymen and their dupes all the shameless lies about the death of this great and wonderful man. A man, compared with whom all of his calumniators, dead and living, were, and are, but dust and vermin.

Let us be honest. Did all the priests of Rome increase the mental wealth of man as much as Bruno? Did all the priests of France do as great a work for the civilization of the world as Voltaire or Diderot? Did all the ministers of Scotland add as much to the sum of human knowledge as David Hume? Have all the clergymen, monks, friars, ministers, priests, bishops, cardinals and popes, from the day of Pentecost to the last election, done as much for human liberty as Thomas Paine?

What would the world be if infidels had never been?

The infidels have been the brave and thoughtful men; the flower of all the world; the pioneers and heralds of the blessed day of liberty and love; the generous spirits of the unworthy past; the seers and

prophets of our race; the great chivalric souls, proud victors on the battlefields of thought, the creditors of all the years to be.

Why should it be taken for granted that the men who devoted their lives to the liberation of their fellow-men should have been hissed at in the hour of death by the snakes of conscience, while men who defended slavery—practiced polygamy—justified the stealing of babes from the breasts of mothers, and lashed the naked back of unpaid labor, are supposed to have passed smilingly from earth to the embraces of the angels? Why should we think that the brave thinkers, the investigators, the honest men, must have left the crumbling shore of time in dread and fear, while the instigators of the massacre of St. Bartholomew; the inventors and users of thumb-screws, of iron boots and racks; the burners and tearers of human flesh; the stealers, the whippers and the enslavers of men; the buyers and beaters of maidens, mothers and babes; the founders of the Inquisition; the makers of chains; the builders of dungeons; the calumniators of the living; the slanderers of the dead, and even the murderers of Jesus Christ, all died in the odor of sanctity, with white, forgiven hands folded upon the breasts of peace, while the

destroyers of prejudice, the apostles of humanity, the soldiers of liberty, the breakers of fetters, the creators of light, died surrounded by the fierce fiends of God?

In those days the philosophers—that is to say, the thinkers—were not buried in holy ground. It was feared that their principles might contaminate the ashes of the just. And they also feared that on the morning of the resurrection they might, in a moment of confusion, slip into heaven. Some were burned, and their ashes scattered; and the bodies of some were thrown naked to beasts, and others buried in unholy earth.

Voltaire knew the history of Adrienne Le Couvreur, a beautiful actress, denied burial.

After all, we do feel an interest in what is to become of our bodies. There is a modesty that belongs to death. Upon this subject Voltaire was infinitely sensitive. It was that he might be buried that he went through the farce of confession, of absolution, and of the last sacrament. The priests knew that he was not in earnest, and Voltaire knew that they would not allow him to be buried in any of the cemeteries of Paris.

His death was kept a secret. The Abbé Mignot

made arrangements for the burial at Romilli-on-the-Seine, more than 100 miles from Paris. On Sunday evening, on the last day of May, 1778, the body of Voltaire, clad in a dressing gown, clothed to resemble an invalid, posed to simulate life, was placed in a carriage; at its side, a servant, whose business it was to keep it in position. To this carriage were attached six horses, so that people might think a great lord was going to his estates. Another carriage followed, in which were a grand nephew and two cousins of Voltaire. All night they traveled, and on the following day arrived at the courtyard of the Abbey. The necessary papers were shown, the mass was performed in the presence of the body, and Voltaire found burial. A few moments afterwards, the prior, who "for charity had given a little earth," received from his bishop a menacing letter forbidding the burial of Voltaire. It was too late.

Voltaire was dead. The foundations of State and Throne had been sapped. The people were becoming acquainted with the real kings and with the actual priests. Unknown men born in misery and want, men whose fathers and mothers had been pavement for the rich, were rising toward the light, and their

shadowy faces were emerging from darkness. Labor and thought became friends. That is, the gutter and the attic fraternized. The monsters of the Night and the angels of the Dawn—the first thinking of revenge, and the others dreaming of equality, liberty and fraternity.

VII.

The Death-Bed Argument.

ALL kinds of criminals, except infidels, meet death with reasonable serenity. As a rule, there is nothing in the death of a pirate to cast any discredit on his profession. The murderer upon the scaffold, with a priest on either side, smilingly exhorts the multitude to meet him in heaven. The man who has succeeded in making his home a hell, meets death without a quiver, provided he has never expressed any doubt as to the divinity of Christ, or the eternal "procession" of the Holy Ghost. The king who has waged cruel and useless war, who has filled countries with widows and fatherless children, with the maimed and diseased, and who has succeeded in offering to the Moloch of ambition the best and bravest of his subjects, dies like a saint.

All the believing kings are in heaven—all the doubting philosophers in perdition. All the persecutors sleep in peace, and the ashes of those who

burned their brothers, sleep in consecrated ground. Libraries could hardly contain the names of the Christian wretches who have filled the world with violence and death in defence of book and creed, and yet they all died the death of the righteous, and no priest, no minister, describes the agony and fear, the remorse and horror with which their guilty souls were filled in the last moments of their lives. These men had never doubted—they had never thought —they accepted the creed as they did the fashion of their clothes. They were not infidels, they could not be—they had been baptized, they had not denied the divinity of Christ, they had partaken of the "last supper." They respected priests, they admitted that Christ had two natures and the same number of wills; they admitted that the Holy Ghost had "proceeded," and that, according to the multiplication table of heaven, once one is three, and three times one is one, and these things put pillows beneath their heads and covered them with the drapery of peace.

They admitted that while kings and priests did nothing worse than to make their fellows wretched, that so long as they only butchered and burnt the innocent and helpless, God would maintain the strict-

est neutrality; but when some honest man, some great and tender soul, expressed a doubt as to the truth of the Scriptures, or prayed to the wrong God, or to the right one by the wrong name, then the real God leaped like a wounded tiger upon his victim, and from his quivering flesh tore his wretched soul.

There is no recorded instance where the uplifted hand of murder has been paralyzed — no truthful account in all the literature of the world of the innocent child being shielded by God. Thousands of crimes are being committed every day — men are at this moment lying in wait for their human prey — wives are whipped and crushed, driven to insanity and death — little children begging for mercy, lifting imploring, tear-filled eyes to the brutal faces of fathers and mothers — sweet girls are deceived, lured and outraged, but God has no time to prevent these things — no time to defend the good and protect the pure. He is too busy numbering hairs and watching sparrows. He listens for blasphemy; looks for persons who laugh at priests; examines baptismal registers; watches professors in college who begin to doubt the geology of Moses and the astronomy of Joshua. He does not particularly object to stealing, if you won't swear. A great many

persons have fallen dead in the act of taking God's name in vain, but millions of men, women and children have been stolen from their homes and used as beasts of burden, but no one engaged in this infamy has ever been touched by the wrathful hand of God.

Now and then a man of genius, of sense, of intellectual honesty, has appeared. Such men have denounced the superstitions of their day. They have pitied the multitude. To see priests devour the substance of the people — priests who made begging one of the learned professions — filled them with loathing and contempt. These men were honest enough to tell their thoughts, brave enough to speak the truth. Then they were denounced, tried, tortured, killed by rack or flame. But some escaped the fury of the fiends who love their enemies, and died naturally in their beds. It would not do for the church to admit that they died peacefully. That would show that religion was not essential at the last moment. Superstition gets its power from the terror of death. It would not do to have the common people understand that a man could deny the Bible — refuse to kiss the cross — contend that Humanity was greater than Christ, and then die as sweetly as Torquemada did, after pouring molten lead into the

ears of an honest man ; or as calmly as Calvin after he had burned Servetus ; or as peacefully as King David after advising with his last breath one son to assassinate another.

The church has taken great pains to show that the last moments of all infidels (that Christians did not succeed in burning) were infinitely wretched and despairing. It was alleged that words could not paint the horrors that were endured by a dying infidel. Every good Christian was expected to, and generally did, believe these accounts. They have been told and retold in every pulpit of the world. Protestant ministers have repeated the lies invented by Catholic priests, and Catholics, by a kind of theological comity, have sworn to the lies told by the Protestants. Upon this point they have always stood together, and will as long as the same falsehood can be used by both.

Instead of doing these things, Voltaire wilfully closed his eyes to the light of the gospel, examined the Bible for himself, advocated intellectual liberty, struck from the brain the fetters of an arrogant faith, assisted the weak, cried out against the torture of man, appealed to reason, endeavored to establish universal toleration, succored the indigent, and defended the oppressed.

He demonstrated that the origin of all religions is the same—the same mysteries — the same miracles— the same imposture — the same temples and ceremonies — the same kind of founders, apostles and dupes — the same promises and threats — the same pretence of goodness and forgiveness and the practice of the same persecution and murder. He proved that religion made enemies — philosophy friends — and that above the rights of Gods were the rights of man.

These were his crimes. Such a man God would not suffer to die in peace. If allowed to meet death with a smile, others might follow his example, until none would be left to light the holy fires of the *auto da fe.* It would not do for so great, so successful, an enemy of the church to die without leaving some shriek of fear, some shudder of remorse, some ghastly prayer of chattered horror uttered by lips covered with blood and foam.

For many centuries the theologians have taught that an unbeliever — an infidel — one who spoke or wrote against their creed, could not meet death with composure ; that in his last moments God would fill his conscience with the serpents of remorse.

For a thousand years the clergy have manufac-

tured the facts to fit this theory — this infamous conception of the duty of man and the justice of God.

The theologians have insisted that crimes against man were, and are, as nothing compared with crimes against God.

Upon the death-bed subject the clergy grow eloquent. When describing the shudderings and shrieks of the dying unbeliever, their eyes glitter with delight.

It is a festival.

They are no longer men. They become hyenas. They dig open graves. They devour the dead.

It is a banquet.

Unsatisfied still, they paint the terrors of hell. They gaze at the souls of the infidels writhing in the coils of the worm that never dies. They see them in flames — in oceans of fire — in gulfs of pain — in abysses of despair. They shout with joy. They applaud.

It is an *auto da fe*, presided over by God.

VIII.

The Second Return.

FOR four hundred years the Bastile had been the outward symbol of oppression. Within its walls the noblest had perished. It was a perpetual threat. It was the last, and often the first, argument of king and priest. Its dungeons, damp and rayless, its massive towers, its secret cells, its instruments of torture, denied the existence of God.

In 1789, on the 14th of July, the people, the multitude, frenzied by suffering, stormed and captured the Bastile. The battle-cry was "Vive Voltaire."

In 1791 permission was given to place in the Pantheon the ashes of Voltaire. He had been buried 110 miles from Paris. Buried by stealth, he was to be removed by a nation. A funeral procession of a hundred miles; every village with its flags and arches; all the people anxious to honor the philosopher of France — the Savior of Calas — the Destroyer of Superstition.

On reaching Paris the great procession moved along the Rue St. Antoine. Here it paused, and

for one night upon the ruins of the Bastile rested the body of Voltaire — rested in triumph, in glory — rested on fallen wall and broken arch, on crumbling stone still damp with tears, on rusting chain and bar and useless bolt — above the dungeons dark and deep, where light had faded from the lives of men and hope had died in breaking hearts.

The conqueror resting upon the conquered.— Throned upon the Bastile, the fallen fortress of Night, the body of Voltaire, from whose brain had issued the Dawn.

For a moment his ashes must have felt the Promethean fire, and the old smile must have illumined once more the face of death.

The vast multitude bowed in reverence, hushed with love and awe heard these words uttered by a priest: "God shall be avenged."

The cry of the priest was a prophecy. Priests skulking in the shadows with faces sinister as night, ghouls in the name of the gospel, desecrated the grave. They carried away the ashes of Voltaire.

The tomb is empty.

God is avenged.

The world is filled with his fame.

Man has conquered.

Was there in the eighteenth century, a man wearing the vestments of the church, the equal of Voltaire?

What cardinal, what bishop, what priest in France raised his voice for the rights of men? What ecclesiastic, what nobleman, took the side of the oppressed — of the peasant? Who denounced the frightful criminal code — the torture of suspected persons? What priest pleaded for the liberty of the citizen? What bishop pitied the victims of the rack? Is there the grave of a priest in France on which a lover of liberty would now drop a flower or a tear? Is there a tomb holding the ashes of a saint from which emerges one ray of light?

If there be another life — a day of judgment, no God can afford to torture in another world the man who abolished torture in this. If God be the keeper of an eternal penitentiary, he should not imprison there the men who broke the chains of slavery here. He cannot afford to make an eternal convict of Voltaire.

Voltaire was a perfect master of the French language, knowing all its moods, tenses and declinations, in fact and in feeling — playing upon it as skillfully as Paganini on his violin, finding expres-

sion for every thought and fancy, writing on the most serious subjects with the gayety of a harlequin, plucking jests from the crumbling mouth of death, graceful as the waving of willows, dealing in double meanings that covered the asp with flowers and flattery — master of satire and compliment — mingling them often in the same line, always interested himself, and therefore interesting others—handling thoughts, questions, subjects as a juggler does balls, keeping them in the air with perfect ease—dressing old words in new meanings, charming, grotesque, pathetic, mingling mirth with tears, wit and wisdom, and sometimes wickedness, logic and laughter. With a woman's instinct knowing the sensitive nerves—just where to touch—hating arrogance of place, the stupidity of the solemn —snatching masks from priest and king, knowing the springs of action and ambition's ends—perfectly familiar with the great world—the intimate of kings and their favorites, sympathizing with the oppressed and imprisoned, with the unfortunate and poor, hating tyranny, despising superstition, and loving liberty with all his heart. Such was Voltaire writing "Œdipus" at seventeen, "Irene" at eighty-three, and crowding between these two tragedies the accomplishment of a thousand lives.

From his throne at the foot of the Alps, he pointed the finger of scorn at every hypocrite in Europe. For half a century, past rack and stake, past dungeon and cathedral, past altar and throne, he carried with brave hands the sacred torch of Reason, whose light at last will flood the world.

LIBERTY IN LITERATURE.

(A TESTIMONIAL TO WALT WHITMAN.)

LIBERTY IN LITERATURE.*

LET US PUT WREATHS ON THE BROWS OF THE LIVING.

I.

IN the year 1855 the American people knew but little of books. Their ideals, their models, were English. Young and Pollok, Addison and Watts, were regarded as great poets. Some of the more reckless read Thomson's "Seasons" and the poems and novels of Sir Walter Scott. A few, not quite orthodox, delighted in the mechanical monotony of Pope, and the really wicked—those lost to all religious shame—were worshipers of Shakespeare. The really orthodox Protestant, untroubled by doubts, considered Milton the greatest poet of them all. Byron and Shelley were hardly respectable—not to be read by young persons. It was admitted on all hands that Burns was a child of nature of whom his mother was ashamed and proud.

In the blessed year aforesaid, candor, free and sincere speech, were under the ban. Creeds at that time were entrenched behind statutes, prejudice, cus-

*An address delivered in Philadelphia, Oct. 21, 1890. Used by permission of the *Truth Seeker Co.*

tom, ignorance, stupidity, Puritanism and slavery; that is to say, slavery of mind and body.

Of course it always has been, and forever will be, impossible for slavery, or any kind or form of injustice, to produce a great poet. There are hundreds of verse makers and writers on the side of wrong—enemies of progress—but they are not poets, they are not men of genius.

At this time a young man—he to whom this testimonial is given—he upon whose head have fallen the snows of more than seventy winters—this man, born within the sound of the sea, gave to the world a book, "Leaves of Grass." This book was, and is, the true transcript of a soul. The man is unmasked. No drapery of hypocrisy, no pretence, no fear. The book was as original in form as in thought. All customs were forgotten or disregarded, all rules broken—nothing mechanical—no imitation—spontaneous, running and winding like a river, multitudinous in its thoughts as the waves of the sea—nothing mathematical or measured—in everything a touch of chaos; lacking what is called form, as clouds lack form, but not lacking the splendor of sunrise or the glory of sunset. It was a marvelous collection and aggregation of fragments, hints, suggestions, memories, and prophecies, weeds and flowers, clouds and

clods, sights and sounds, emotions and passions, waves, shadows and constellations.

His book was received by many with disdain, with horror, with indignation and protest—by the few as a marvelous, almost miraculous, message to the world—full of thought, philosophy, poetry and music.

In the republic of mediocrity genius is dangerous. A great soul appears and fills the world with new and marvelous harmonies. In his words is the old Promethean flame. The heart of nature beats and throbs in his line. The respectable prudes and pedagogues sound the alarm, and cry, or rather screech: "Is this a book for a young person?"

A poem true to life as a Greek statue—candid as nature—fills these barren souls with fear.

They forget that drapery about the perfect was suggested by immodesty.

The provincial prudes, and others of like mold, pretend that love is a duty rather than a passion—a kind of self-denial—not an over-mastering joy. They preach the gospel of pretence and pantalettes. In the presence of sincerity, of truth, they cast down their eyes and endeavor to feel immodest. To them, the most beautiful thing is hypocrisy adorned with a blush.

They have no idea of an honest, pure passion, glorying in its strength—intense, intoxicated with the beautiful, giving even to inanimate things pulse and motion, and that transfigures, ennobles, and idealizes the object of its adoration.

They do not walk the streets of the city of life—they explore the sewers; they stand in the gutters and cry "Unclean!" They pretend that beauty is a snare; that love is a Delilah; that the highway of joy is the broad road, lined with flowers and filled with perfume, leading to the city of eternal sorrow.

Since the year 1855 the American people have developed; they are somewhat acquainted with the literature of the world. They have witnessed the most tremendous of revolutions, not only upon the fields of battle, but in the world of thought. The American citizen has concluded that it is hardly worth while being a sovereign unless he has the right to think for himself.

And now, from this height, with the vantage-ground of to-day, I propose to examine this book and to state, in a general way, what Walt Whitman has done, what he has accomplished, and the place he has won in the world of thought.

II.

THE RELIGION OF THE BODY.

WALT WHITMAN stood when he published his book, where all stand to-night, on the perpetually moving line where history ends and prophecy begins. He was full of life to the very tips of his fingers—brave, eager, candid, joyous with health. He was acquainted with the past. He knew something of song and story, of philosophy and art; much of the heroic dead, of brave suffering, of the thoughts of men, the habits of the people—rich as well as poor—familiar with labor, a friend of wind and wave, touched by love and friendship, liking the open road, enjoying the fields and paths, the crags, friend of the forest—feeling that he was free—neither master nor slave; willing that all should know his thoughts; open as the sky, candid as nature, and he gave his thoughts, his dreams, his conclusions, his hopes and his mental portrait to his fellow-men.

Walt Whitman announced the gospel of the body. He confronted the people. He denied the depravity

of man. He insisted that love is not a crime; that men and women should be proudly natural; that they need not grovel on the earth and cover their faces for shame. He taught the dignity and glory of the father and mother; the sacredness of maternity.

Maternity, tender and pure as the tear of pity, holy as suffering—the crown, the flower, the ecstasy of love!

People had been taught from Bibles and from creeds that maternity was a kind of crime; that the woman should be purified by some ceremony in some temple built in honor of some god. This barbarism was attacked in "Leaves of Grass."

The glory of simple life was sung; a declaration of independence was made for each and all.

And yet this appeal to manhood and to womanhood was misunderstood. It was denounced simply because it was in harmony with the great trend of nature. To me, the most obscene word in our language is celibacy.

It was not the fashion for people to speak or write their thoughts. We were flooded with the literature of hypocrisy. The writers did not faithfully describe the worlds in which they lived. They endeavored to make a fashionable world. They pretended that the cottage or the hut in which they

dwelt was a palace, and they called the little area in which they threw their slops their domain, their realm, their empire. They were ashamed of the real, of what their world actually was. They imitated; that is to say, they told lies, and these lies filled the literature of most lands.

Walt Whitman defended the sacredness of love, the purity of passion—the passion that builds every home and fills the world with art and song.

They cried out: "He is a defender of passion—he is a libertine! He lives in the mire. He lacks spirituality!"

Whoever differs with the multitude, especially with a led multitude—that is to say, with a multitude of taggers—will find out from their leaders that he has committed an unpardonable sin. It is a crime to travel a road of your own, especially if you put up guide-boards for the information of others.

Many, many centuries ago Epicurus, the greatest man of his century, and of many centuries before and after, said: "Happiness is the only good; happiness is the supreme end." This man was temperate, frugal, generous, noble—and yet through all these years he has been denounced by the hypocrites of the world as a mere eater and drinker.

It was said that Whitman had exaggerated the importance of love—that he had made too much of this passion. Let me say that no poet—not excepting Shakespeare—has had imagination enough to exaggerate the importance of human love—a passion that contains all heights and all depths—ample as space, with a sky in which glitter all constellations, and that has within it all storms, all lightnings, all wrecks and ruins, all griefs, all sorrows, all shadows, and all the joy and sunshine of which the heart and brain are capable.

No writer must be measured by a word or paragraph. He is to be measured by his work—by the tendency, not of one line, but by the tendency of all.

Which way does the great stream tend? Is it for good or evil? Are the motives high and noble, or low and infamous?

We cannot measure Shakespeare by a few lines, neither can we measure the Bible by a few chapters, nor "Leaves of Grass" by a few paragraphs. In each there are many things that I neither approve nor believe—but in all books you will find a mingling of wisdom and foolishness, of prophecies and mistakes—in other words, among the excellencies there will be defects. The mine is not all gold, or

all silver, or all diamonds—there are baser metals. The trees of the forest are not all of one size. On some of the highest there are dead and useless limbs, and there may be growing beneath the bushes weeds, and now and then a poisonous vine.

If I were to edit the great books of the world, I might leave out some lines and I might leave out the best. I have no right to make of my brain a sieve and say that only that which passes through belongs to the rest of the human race. I claim the right to choose. I give that right to all.

Walt Whitman had the courage to express his thought—the candor to tell the truth. And here let me say it gives me joy—a kind of perfect satisfaction—to look above the bigoted bats, the satisfied owls and wrens and chickadees, and see the great eagle poised, circling higher and higher, unconscious of their existence. And it gives me joy, a kind of perfect satisfaction, to look above the petty passions and jealousies of small and respectable people, above the considerations of place and power and reputation, and see a brave, intrepid man.

It must be remembered that the American people had separated from the Old World—that we had declared not only the independence of colonies, but the independence of the individual. We had done

more—we had declared that the state could no longer be ruled by the church, and that the church could not be ruled by the state, and that the individual could not be ruled by the church.

These declarations were in danger of being forgotten. We needed a new voice, sonorous, loud and clear, a new poet for America, for the new epoch, somebody to chant the morning song of the new day.

The great man who gives a true transcript of his mind, fascinates and instructs. Most writers suppress individuality. They wish to please the public. They flatter the stupid and pander to the prejudice of their readers. They write for the market, making books as other mechanics make shoes. They have no message, they bear no torch, they are simply the slaves of customers.

The books they manufacture are handled by "the trade;" they are regarded as harmless. The pulpit does not object; the young person can read the monotonous pages without a blush—or a thought.

On the title pages of these books you will find the imprint of the great publishers; on the rest of the pages, nothing. These books might be prescribed for insomnia.

III.

Men of talent, men of business, touch life upon few sides. They travel but the beaten path. The creative spirit is not in them. They regard with suspicion a poet who touches life on every side. They have little confidence in that divine thing called sympathy, and they do not and cannot understand the man who enters into the hopes, the aims and the feelings of all others.

In all genius there is the touch of chaos—a little of the vagabond; and the successful tradesman, the man who buys and sells, or manages a bank, does not care to deal with a person who has only poems for collaterals; they have a little fear of such people, and regard them as the awkward countryman does a sleight-of-hand performer.

In every age in which books have been produced the governing class, the respectable, have been opposed to the works of real genius. If what are known as the best people could have had their way, if the pulpit had been consulted—the provincial moralists—the works of Shakespeare would have been suppressed. Not a line would have reached our time. And the same may be said of every dramatist of his age.

If the Scotch Kirk could have decided, nothing would have been known of Robert Burns. If the

good people, the orthodox, could have had their say, not one line of Voltaire would now be known. All the plates of the French Encyclopedia would have been destroyed with the thousands that were destroyed. Nothing would have been known of D'Alembert, Grimm, Diderot, or any of the Titans who warred against the thrones and altars and laid the foundation of modern literature not only, but what is of far greater moment, universal education.

It is not too much to say that every book now held in high esteem would have been destroyed, if those in authority could have had their will. Every book of modern times that has a real value, that has enlarged the intellectual horizon of mankind, that has developed the brain, that has furnished real food for thought, can be found in the Index Expurgatorius of the Papacy, and nearly every one has been commended to the free minds of men by the denunciations of Protestants.

If the guardians of society, the protectors of "young persons," could have had their way, we should have known nothing of Byron or Shelley. The voices that thrill the world would now be silent. If authority could have had its way, the world would have been as ignorant now as it was when our an-

cestors lived in holes or hung from dead limbs by their prehensile tails.

But we are not forced to go very far back. If Shakespeare had been published for the first time now, those divine plays—greater than continents and seas, greater even than the constellations of the midnight sky—would be excluded from the mails by the decision of the present enlightened postmaster-general.

The poets have always lived in an ideal world, and that ideal world has always been far better than the real world. As a consequence, they have forever roused, not simply the imagination, but the energies—the enthusiasm of the human race.

The great poets have been on the side of the oppressed—of the downtrodden. They have suffered with the imprisoned and the enslaved, and whenever and wherever man has suffered for the right, wherever the hero has been stricken down—whether on field or scaffold—some man of genius has walked by his side, and some poet has given form and expression, not simply to his deeds, but to his aspirations.

From the Greek and Roman world we still hear the voices of a few. The poets, the philosophers, the artists and the orators still speak. Countless

millions have been covered by the waves of oblivion, but the few who uttered the elemental truths, who had sympathy for the whole human race, and who were great enough to prophesy a grander day, are as alive to-night as when they roused, by their bodily presence, by their living voices, by their works of art, the enthusism of their fellow-men.

Think of the respectable people, of the men of wealth and position, those who dwelt in mansions, children of success, who went down to the grave voiceless, and whose names we do not know. Think of the vast multitudes, the endless processions, that entered the caverns of eternal night, leaving no thought, no truth as a legacy to mankind!

The great poets have sympathized with the people. They have uttered in all ages the human cry. Unbought by gold, unawed by power, they have lifted high the torch that illuminates the world.

IV.

Walt Whitman is in the highest sense a believer in democracy. He knows that there is but one excuse for government—the preservation of liberty, to the end that man may be happy. He knows that there is but one excuse for any institution, secular or religious—the preservation of liberty; and that there is but one excuse for schools, for universal education, for the ascertainment of

facts, namely, the preservation of liberty. He resents the arrogance and cruelty of power. He has sworn never to be tyrant or slave. He has solemnly declared:

"I speak the pass-word primeval, I give the sign of democracy,
By God! I will accept nothing which all cannot have their counterpart of on the same terms."

This one declaration covers the entire ground. It is a declaration of independence, and it is also a declaration of justice, that is to say, a declaration of the independence of the individual, and a declaration that all shall be free. The man who has this spirit can truthfully say:

"I have taken off my hat to nothing known or unknown. I am for those that have never been master'd."

There is in Whitman what he calls "The boundless impatience of restraint," together with that sense of justice which compelled him to say, "Neither a servant nor a master am I."

He was wise enough to know that giving others the same rights that he claims for himself could not harm him, and he was great enough to say: "As if it were not indispensable to my own rights that others possess the same."

He felt as all should feel, that the liberty of no man is safe unless the liberty of each is safe.

There is in our country a little of the old servile spirit, a little of the bowing and cringing to others. Many Americans do not understand that the officers of the government are simply the servants of the people. Nothing is so demoralizing as the worship of place. Whitman has reminded the people of this country that they are supreme, and he has said to them:

"The President is there in the White House for you, it is not you who are here for him,
The Secretaries act in their bureaus for you, not you here for them.
Doctrines, politics and civilization exurge from you,
Sculpture and monuments and any thing inscribed anywhere are tallied in you."

He describes the ideal American citizen—the one who

"Says indifferently and alike 'How are you, friend?' to the President at his levee,
And he says 'Good-day, my brother,' to Cudge that hoes in the sugar-field."

Long ago, when the politicians were wrong, when the judges were subservient, when the pulpit was a coward, Walt Whitman shouted:

"Man shall not hold property in man."

"The least develop'd person on earth is just as important and sacred to himself or herself as the most develop'd person is to himself or herself."

This is the very soul of true democracy.

Beauty is not all there is of poetry. It must contain the truth. It is not simply an oak, rude and grand, neither is it simply a vine. It is both. Around the oak of truth runs the vine of beauty.

Walt Whitman utters the elemental truths and is the poet of democracy. He is also the poet of individuality.

V.

INDIVIDUALITY.

IN order to protect the liberties of a nation, we must protect the individual. A democracy is a nation of free individuals. The individuals are not to be sacrificed to the nation. The nation exists only for the purpose of guarding and protecting the individuality of men and women. Walt Whitman has told us that: "The whole theory of the universe is directed unerringly to one single individual —namely to You."

And he has also told us that the greatest city—the greatest nation—is "where the citizen is always the head and ideal."

And that

"A great city is that which has the greatest men and women,
If it be a few ragged huts it is still the greatest city in the whole world."

By this test maybe the greatest city on the continent to-night is Camden.

This poet has asked of us this question:

"What do you suppose will satisfy the soul, except to walk free and own no superior?"

The man who asks this question has left no impress of his lips in the dust, and has no dirt upon his knees.

He was great enough to say:

"The soul has that measureless pride which revolts from every lesson but its own."

He carries the idea of individuality to its utmost height:

"What do you suppose I would intimate to you in a hundred ways, but that man or woman is as good as God?
And that there is no God any more divine than Yourself?"

Glorying in individuality, in the freedom of the soul, he cries out:

"O to struggle against great odds, to meet enemies undaunted!
To be entirely alone with them, to find how much one can stand!
To look strife, torture, prison, popular odium, face to face!
To mount the scaffold, to advance to the muzzles of guns with perfect nonchalance!
To be indeed a God!"

And again:

"O the joy of a manly self-hood!
To be servile to none, to defer to none, not to any tyrant known or unknown,

To walk with erect carriage, a step springy and elastic,
To look with calm gaze or with a flashing eye,
To speak with full and sonorous voice out of a broad chest,
To confront with your personality all the other personalities of the earth."

Walt Whitman is willing to stand alone. He is sufficient unto himself, and he says:

"Henceforth I ask not good-fortune, I myself am good-fortune.

. . . . . .

Strong and content I travel the open road."

He is one of

" Those that look carelessly in the faces of Presidents and Governors, as to say 'Who are you?'"

And not only this, but he has the courage to say: "Nothing, not God, is greater to one than one's self."

Walt Whitman is the poet of Individuality—the defender of the rights of each for the sake of all—and his sympathies are as wide as the world. He is the defender of the whole race.

VI.

HUMANITY.

THE great poet is intensely human, infinitely sympathetic, entering into the joys and griefs of others, bearing their burdens, knowing their sorrows. Brain without heart is not much; they must act together. When the respectable people of the North, the rich, the successful, were willing to carry out the Fugitive Slave Law, Walt Whitman said:

"I am the hounded slave, I wince at the bite of the dogs,
Hell and despair are upon me, crack and again crack the marksmen,
I clutch the rails of the fence, my gore dribs, thinn'd with the ooze of my skin,
I fall on the weeds and stones,
The riders spur their unwilling horses, haul close,
Taunt my dizzy ears, and beat me violently over the head with whip-stocks.
Agonies are one of my changes of garments,
I do not ask the wounded person how he feels I myself become the wounded person. . . .
I . . . see myself in prison shaped like another man,
And feel the dull unintermitted pain.
For me the keepers of convicts shoulder their carbines and keep watch,
It is I let out in the morning and barr'd at night.

Not a mutineer walks handcuff'd to jail but I am handcuff'd to him and walk by his side.

. . . . . .

Judge not as the judge judges, but as the sun falling upon a helpless thing."

Of the very worst he had the infinite tenderness to say: "Not until the sun excludes you will I exclude you."

In this age of greed when houses and lands and stocks and bonds outrank human life; when gold is of more value than blood, these words should be read by all:

"When the psalm sings instead of the singer,
When the script preaches instead of the preacher,
When the pulpit descends and goes instead of the carver that carved the supporting desk,
When I can touch the body of books by night or day, and when they touch my body back again,
When a university course convinces like a slumbering woman and child convince,
When the minted gold in the vault smiles like the night-watchman's daughter,
When warrantee deeds loaf in chairs opposite and are my friendly companions,
I intend to reach them my hand, and make as much of them as I do of men and women like you."

VII.

The poet is also a painter, a sculptor—he, too, deals in form and color. The great poet is of necessity a great artist. With a few words he

creates pictures, filling his canvas with living men and women—with those who feel and speak. Have you ever read the account of the stage-driver's funeral? Let me read it:

"Cold dash of waves at the ferry-wharf, posh and ice in the river, half-frozen mud in the streets,
A gray discouraged sky overhead, the short last daylight of December,
A hearse and stages, the funeral of an old Broadway stage-driver, the cortege mostly drivers.

Steady the trot to the cemetery, duly rattles the death-bell,
The gate is pass'd, the new-dug grave is halted at, the living alight, the hearse uncloses.
The coffin is pass'd out, lower'd and settled, the whip is laid on the coffin, the earth is swiftly shovel'd in,
The mound above is flatted with the spades—silence,
A minute—no one moves or speaks—it is done,
He is decently put away—is there anything more?

He was a good fellow, free-mouth'd, quick-temper'd, not bad-looking,
Ready with life or death for a friend, fond of women, gambled, ate hearty, drank hearty,
Had known what it was to be flush, grew low-spirited toward the last, sicken'd, was helped by a contribution,
Died, aged forty-one years—and that was his funeral."

Let me read you another description, one of a woman:

"Behold a woman!
She looks out from her quaker cap, her face is clearer and more beautiful than the sky.

She sits in an armchair under the shaded porch of the farmhouse,
The sun just shines on her old white head.

Her ample gown is of cream-hued linen,
Her grandsons raised the flax, and her granddaughters spun it with the distaff and the wheel.

The melodious character of the earth.
The finish beyond which philosophy cannot go and does not wish to go,
The justified mother of men."

Would you hear of an old-time sea-fight?

"Would you learn who won by the light of the moon and stars?
List to the yarn, as my grandmother's father the sailor told it to me.

Our foe was no skulk in his ship I tell you, (said he,)
His was the surly English pluck, and there is no tougher or truer, and never was, and never will be;
Along the lower'd eve he came horribly raking us.

We closed with him, the yards entangled, the cannon touch'd,
My captain lash'd fast with his own hands.

We had receiv'd some eighteen pound shots under the water,
On our lower gun-deck two large pieces had burst at the first fire, killing all around and blowing up overhead.

Fighting at sun-down, fighting at dark,
Ten o'clock at night, the full moon well up, our leaks on the gain, and five feet of water reported,

The master-at-arms loosing the prisoners confined in the after-hold to give them a chance for themselves.

The transit to and from the magazine is now stopt by the sentinels,
They see so many strange faces they do not know whom to trust.

Our frigate takes fire,
The other asks if we demand quarter?
If our colors are struck and the fighting done?

Now I laugh content, for I hear the voice of my little captain,
'We have not struck,' he composedly cries, 'we have just begun our part of the fighting.'

Only three guns are in use,
One is directed by the captain himself against the enemy's mainmast,
Two well serv'd with grape and canister silence his musketry and clear his decks.

The tops alone second the fire of this little battery, especially the main-top,
They hold out bravely during the whole of the action.

Not a moment's cease,
The leaks gain fast on the pumps, the fire eats toward the powder-magazines.

One of the pumps has been shot away, it is generally thought we are sinking.
Serene stands the little captain,
He is not hurried, his voice is neither high nor low,
His eyes give more light to us than our battle-lanterns.

Toward twelve there in the beams of the moon they surrender to us.

Stretch'd and still lies the midnight,

Two great hulls motionless on the breast of the darkness.

Our vessel riddled and slowly sinking, preparations to pass to the one we have conquer'd,

The captain on the quarter-deck coldly giving his orders through a countenance white as a sheet,

Near by the corpse of the child that serv'd in the cabin,

The dead face of an old salt with long white hair and carefully curl'd whiskers,

The flames spite of all that can be done flickering aloft and below,

The husky voices of the two or three officers yet fit for duty,

Formless stacks of bodies and bodies by themselves, dabs of flesh upon the masts and spars,

Cut of cordage, dangle of rigging, slight shock of the soothe of waves,

Black and impassive guns, litter of powder-parcels, strong scent,

A few large stars overhead, silent and mournful shining,

Delicate sniffs of sea-breeze, smells of sedgy grass and fields by the shore, death-messages given in charge to survivors,

The hiss of the surgeon's knife, the gnawing teeth of his saw,

Wheeze, cluck, swash of falling blood, short wild scream, and long, dull, tapering groan."

Some people say that this is not poetry—that it lacks measure and rhyme.

VIII.

WHAT IS POETRY?

THE whole world is engaged in the invisible commerce of thought. That is to say, in the exchange of thoughts by words, symbols, sounds, colors and forms. The motions of the silent, invisible world, where feeling glows and thought flames —that contains all seeds of action—are made known only by sounds and colors, forms, objects, relations, uses and qualities, so that the visible universe is a dictionary, an aggregation of symbols, by which and through which is carried on the invisible commerce of thought. Each object is capable of many meanings, or of being used in many ways to convey ideas or states of feeling or of facts that take place in the world of the brain.

The greatest poet is the one who selects the best, the most appropriate symbols to convey the best, the highest, the sublimest thoughts. Each man occupies a world of his own. He is the only citizen of his world. He is subject and sovereign, and the

best he can do is to give the facts concerning the world in which he lives to the citizens of other worlds. No two of these worlds are alike. They are of all kinds, from the flat, barren, and uninteresting—from the small and shriveled and worthless—to those whose rivers and mountains and seas and constellations belittle and cheapen the visible world. The inhabitants of these marvelous worlds have been the singers of songs, utterers of great speech—the creators of art.

And here lies the difference between creators and imitators : the creator tells what passes in his own world—the imitator does not. The imitator abdicates, and by the fact of imitation falls upon his knees. He is like one who, hearing a traveler talk, pretends to others that he has traveled.

In nearly all lands, the poet has been privileged. For the sake of beauty, they have allowed him to speak, and for that reason he has told the story of the oppressed, and has excited the indignation of honest men and even the pity of tyrants. He, above all others, has added to the intellectual beauty of the world. He has been the true creator of language, and has left his impress on mankind.

What I have said is not only true of poetry—it is true of all speech. All are compelled to use the

visible world as a dictionary. Words have been invented and are being invented, for the reason that new powers are found in the old symbols, new qualities, relations, uses and meanings. The growth of language is necessary on account of the development of the human mind. The savage needs but few symbols—the civilized many—the poet most of all.

The old idea was, however, that the poet must be a rhymer. Before printing was known, it was said: the rhyme assists the memory. That excuse no longer exists.

Is rhyme a necessary part of poetry? In my judgment, rhyme is a hindrance to expression. The rhymer is compelled to wander from his subject, to say more or less than he means, to introduce irrelevant matter that interferes continually with the dramatic action and is a perpetual obstruction to sincere utterance.

All poems, of necessity, must be short. The highly and purely poetic is the sudden bursting into blossom of a great and tender thought. The planting of the seed, the growth, the bud and flower must be rapid. The spring must be quick and warm, the soil perfect, the sunshine and rain enough—everything should tend to hasten, nothing to delay. In poetry, as in wit, the crystallization must be sudden.

The greatest poems are rhythmical. While rhyme is a hindrance, rhythm seems to be the comrade of the poetic. Rhythm has a natural foundation. Under emotion the blood rises and falls, the muscles contract and relax, and this action of the blood is as rhythmical as the rise and fall of the sea. In the highest form of expression the thought should be in harmony with this natural ebb and flow.

The highest poetic truth is expressed in rhythmical form. I have sometimes thought that an idea selects its own words, chooses its own garments, and that when the thought has possession, absolutely, of the speaker or writer, he unconsciously allows the thought to clothe itself.

The great poetry of the world keeps time with the winds and the waves.

I do not mean by rhythm a recurring accent at accurately measured intervals. Perfect time is the death of music. There should always be room for eager haste and delicious delay, and whatever change there may be in the rhythm or time, the action itself should suggest perfect freedom.

A word more about rhythm. I believe that certain feelings and passions—joy, grief, emulation, revenge, produce certain molecular movements in the brain—that every thought is accompanied by

certain physical phenomena. Now, it may be that certain sounds, colors, and forms produce the same molecular action in the brain that accompanies certain feelings, and that these sounds, colors and forms produce first the molecular movements and these in their turn reproduce the feelings, emotions and states of mind capable of producing the same or like molecular movements. So that what we call heroic music produces the same molecular action in the brain—the same physical changes—that are produced by the real feeling of heroism ; that the sounds we call plaintive produce the same molecular movement in the brain that grief, or the twilight of grief, actually produces. There may be a rhythmical molecular movement belonging to each state of mind, that accompanies each thought or passion, and it may be that music, or painting, or sculpture, produces the same state of mind or feeling that produces the music or painting or sculpture, by producing the same molecular movements.

All arts are born of the same spirit, and express like thoughts in different ways—that is to say, they produce like states of mind and feeling. The sculptor, the painter, the composer, the poet, the orator, work to the same end, with different materials. The painter expresses through form and color and rela-

tion; the sculptor through form and relation. The poet also paints and chisels—his words give form, relation and color. His statues and his paintings do not crumble, neither do they fade, nor will they as long as language endures. The composer touches the passions, produces the very states of feeling produced by the painter and sculptor, the poet and orator. In all these there must be rhythm—that is to say, proportion—that is to say, harmony, melody.

So that the greatest poet is the one who idealizes the common, who gives new meanings to old symbols, who transfigures the ordinary things of life. He must deal with the hopes and fears, and with the experiences of the people.

The poetic is not the exceptional. A perfect poem is like a perfect day. It has the undefinable charm of naturalness and ease. It must not appear to be the result of great labor. We feel, in spite of ourselves, that man does best that which he does easiest.

The great poet is the instrumentality, not always of his time, but of the best of his time, and he must be in unison and accord with the ideals of his race. The sublimer he is, the simpler he is. The thoughts of the people must be clad in the garments of feeling —the words must be known, apt, familiar. The height must be in the thought, in the sympathy.

In the olden time they used to have May day parties, and the prettiest child was crowned Queen of May. Imagine an old blacksmith and his wife looking at their little daughter clad in white and crowned with roses. They would wonder while they looked at her, how they ever came to have so beautiful a child. It is thus that the poet clothes the intellectual children or ideals of the people. They must not be gemmed and garlanded beyond the recognition of their parents. Out from all the flowers and beauty must look the eyes of the child they know.

We have grown tired of gods and goddesses in art. Milton's heavenly militia excites our laughter. Light-houses have driven sirens from the dangerous coasts. We have found that we do not depend on the imagination for wonders—there are millions of miracles under our feet.

Nothing can be more marvelous than the common and everyday facts of life. The phantoms have been cast aside. Men and women are enough for men and women. In their lives is all the tragedy and all the comedy that they can comprehend.

The painter no longer crowds his canvas with the winged and impossible—he paints life as he sees it, people as he knows them, and in whom he is inter-

ested. "The Angelus," the perfection of pathos, is nothing but two peasants bending their heads in thankfulness as they hear the solemn sound of the distant bell—two peasants, who have nothing to be thankful for, nothing but weariness and want, nothing but the crusts that they soften with their tears—nothing. And yet as you look at that picture you feel that they have something besides to be thankful for—that they have life, love, and hope—and so the distant bell makes music in their simple hearts.

IX.

The attitude of Whitman toward religion has not been understood. Toward all forms of worship, toward all creeds, he has maintained the attitude of absolute fairness. He does not believe that Nature has given her last message to man. He does not believe that all has been ascertained. He denies that any sect has written down the entire truth. He believes in progress, and so believing he says:

"We consider Bibles and religions divine—I do not say they are not divine,
I say they have all grown out of you, and may grow out of you still,
It is not they who give the life, it is you who give the life."

. . . . . .

"His [the poet's] thoughts are the hymns of the praise of things,

In the dispute on God and eternity he is silent."

. . . . . .

"Have you thought there could be but a single supreme?
There can be any number of supremes—one does not countervail another anymore than one eyesight countervails another."

Upon the great questions, as to the great problems, he feels only the serenity of a great and well-poised soul:

"No array of terms can say how much I am at peace about God and about death.
I hear and behold God in every object, yet understand God not in the least,
Nor do I understand who there can be more wonderful than myself. . . .
In the faces of men and women I see God, and in my own face in the glass,
I find letters from God dropt in the street, and every one is sign'd by God's name."

The whole visible world is regarded by him as a revelation, and so is the invisible world, and with this feeling he writes:

"Not objecting to special revelations—considering a curl of smoke or a hair on the back of my hand just as curious as any revelation."

The creeds do not satisfy, the old mythologies are not enough; they are too narrow at best, giving

only hints and suggestions; and feeling this lack in that which has been written and preached, Whitman says:

"Magnifying and applying come I,
Outbidding at the start the old cautious hucksters,
Taking myself the exact dimensions of Jehovah,
Lithographing Kronos, Zeus his son, and Hercules his grandson,
Buying drafts of Osiris, Isis, Belus, Brahma, Buddha,
In my portfolio placing Manito loose, Allah on a leaf, the crucifix engraved,
With Odin and the hideous-faced Mexitli, and every idol and image,
Taking them all for what they are worth, and not a cent more."

Whitman keeps open house. He is intellectually hospitable. He extends his hand to a new idea. He does not accept a creed because it is wrinkled and old and has a long white beard. He knows that hypocrisy has a venerable look, and that it relies on looks and masks, on stupidity and fear. Neither does he reject or accept the new because it is new. He wants the truth, and so he welcomes all until he knows just who and what they are.

X.

PHILOSOPHY.

WALT WHITMAN is a philosopher. The more a man has thought, the more he has studied, the more he has traveled intellectually, the less certain he is. Only the very ignorant are perfectly satisfied that they know. To the common man the great problems are easy. He has no trouble in accounting for the universe. He can tell you the origin and destiny of man and the why and the wherefore of things. As a rule, he is a believer in special providence, and is egotistic enough to suppose that everything that happens in the universe happens in reference to him.

A colony of red ants lived at the foot of the Alps. It happened one day that an avalanche destroyed the hill; and one of the ants was heard to remark: "Who could have taken so much trouble to destroy our home?"

Walt Whitman walked by the side of the sea "where the fierce old mother endlessly cries for her castaways," and endeavored to think out, to fathom the mystery of being; and he said:

"I too but signify at the utmost a little wash'd-up drift,
A few sands and dead leaves to gather,
Gather, and merge myself as part of the sands and drift.
. . . . . .

Aware now that amid all that blab whose echoes recoil upon me I have not once had the least idea who or what I am,
But that before all my arrogant poems the real Me stands yet untouch'd, untold, altogether unreach'd,
Withdrawn far, mocking me with mock-congratulatory signs and bows,
With peals of distant ironical laughter at every word I have written,
Pointing in silence to these songs, and then to the sand beneath. . . .
I perceive I have not really understood any thing, not a single object, and that no man ever can."

There is in our language no profounder poem than the one entitled "Elemental Drifts."

The effort to find the origin has ever been, and will forever be, fruitless. Those who endeavor to find the secret of life resemble a man looking in the mirror, who thinks that if he only could be quick enough he could grasp the image that he sees behind the glass.

The latest word of this poet upon this subject is as follows:

"To me this life with all its realities and functions

is finally a mystery, the real something yet to be evolved, and the stamp and shape and life here somehow giving an important, perhaps the main outline to something further. Somehow this hangs over everything else, and stands behind it, is inside of all facts, and the concrete and material, and the worldly affairs of life and sense. That is the purport and meaning behind all the other meanings of LEAVES OF GRASS."

As a matter of fact, the questions of origin and destiny are beyond the grasp of the human mind. We can see a certain distance; beyond that, everything is indistinct; and beyond the indistinct is the unseen. In the presence of these mysteries—and everything is a mystery so far as origin, destiny, and nature are concerned—the intelligent, honest man is compelled to say, "I do not know."

In the great midnight a few truths like stars shine on forever, and from the brain of man come a few struggling gleams of light, a few momentary sparks.

Some have contended that everything is spirit; others that everything is matter; and again, others have maintained that a part is matter and a part is spirit; some that spirit was first and matter after; others that matter was first and spirit after; and others that matter and spirit have existed together.

But none of these people can by any possibility tell what matter is, or what spirit is, or what the difference is between spirit and matter.

The materialists look upon the spiritualists as substantially crazy; and the spiritualists regard the materialists as low and groveling. These spiritualistic people hold matter in contempt; but, after all, matter is quite a mystery. You take in your hand a little earth—a little dust. Do you know what it is? In this dust you put a seed; the rain falls upon it; the light strikes it; the seed grows; it bursts into blossom; it produces fruit.

What is this dust—this womb? Do you understand it? Is there anything in the wide universe more wonderful than this?

Take a grain of sand, reduce it to powder, take the smallest possible particle, look at it with a microscope, contemplate its every part for days, and it remains the citadel of a secret—an impregnable fortress. Bring all the theologians, philosophers, and scientists in serried ranks against it; let them attack on every side with all the arts and arms of thought and force. The citadel does not fall. Over the battlements floats the flag, and the victorious secret smiles at the baffled hosts.

Walt Whitman did not and does not imagine that

he has reached the limit—the end of the road traveled by the human race. He knows that every victory over nature is but the preparation for another battle. This truth was in his mind when he said: "Understand me well; it is provided in the essence of things, that from any fruition of success, no matter what, shall come forth something to make a greater struggle necessary."

This is the generalization of all history.

XI.

THE TWO POEMS.

THERE are two of these poems to which I will call special attention. The first is entitled, "A Word Out of the Sea."

The boy, coming out of the rocked cradle, wandering over the sands and fields, up from the mystic play of shadows, out of the patches of briers and blackberries—from the memories of birds—from the thousand responses of his heart—goes back to the sea and his childhood, and sings a reminiscence.

Two guests from Alabama—two birds—build their nest, and there were four light green eggs, spotted with brown, and the two birds sang for joy :

"Shine! shine! shine!
Pour down your warmth, great sun!
While we bask, we two together.
Two together!
Winds blow south, or winds blow north,
Day come white, or night come black,
Home, or rivers and mountains from home,
Singing all time, minding no time,
While we two keep together."

In a little while one of the birds is missed and never appeared again, and all through the summer the mate, the solitary guest, was singing of the lost :

"Blow ! blow ! blow !
Blow up sea-winds along Paumanok's shore ;
I wait and I wait till you blow my mate to me."

And the boy that night, blending himself with the shadows, with bare feet, went down to the sea, where the white arms out in the breakers were tirelessly tossing ; listening to the songs and translating the notes.

And the singing bird called loud and high for the mate, wondering what the dusky spot was in the brown and yellow, seeing the mate whichever way he looked, piercing the woods and the earth with his song, hoping that the mate might hear his cry ; stopping that he might not lose her answer ; waiting and then crying again : " Here I am ! And this gentle call is for you. Do not be deceived by the whistle of the wind ; those are the shadows ; " and at last crying :

" O past ! O happy life ! O songs of joy !
In the air, in the woods, over fields,
Loved ! loved ! loved ! loved ! loved !
But my mate no more, no more with me !
We two together no more."

And then the boy, understanding the song that had awakened in his breast a thousand songs clearer and louder and more sorrowful than the bird's, knowing that the cry of unsatisfied love would never again be absent from him; thinking then of the destiny of all, and asking of the sea the final word, and the sea answering, delaying not and hurrying not, spoke the low delicious word "Death!" "ever Death!"

The next poem, one that will live as long as our language, entitled: "When Lilacs Last in the Door-yard Bloom'd," is on the death of Lincoln,

"The sweetest, wisest soul of all my days and lands."

One who reads this will never forget the odor of the lilac, "the lustrous western star" and "the gray-brown bird singing in the pines and cedars."

In this poem the dramatic unities are perfectly preserved, the atmosphere and climate in harmony with every event.

Never will he forget the solemn journey of the coffin through day and night, with the great cloud darkening the land, nor the pomp of inlooped flags, the processions long and winding, the flambeaus of night, the torches' flames, the silent sea of faces, the

unbared heads, the thousand voices rising strong and solemn, the dirges, the shuddering organs, the tolling bells—and the sprig of lilac.

And then for a moment they will hear the gray-brown bird singing in the cedars, bashful and tender, while the lustrous star lingers in the west, and they will remember the pictures hung on the chamber walls to adorn the burial house—pictures of spring and farms and homes, and the gray smoke lucid and bright, and the floods of yellow gold—of the gorgeous indolent sinking sun—the sweet herbage under foot—the green leaves of the trees prolific—the breast of the river with the wind-dapple here and there, and the varied and ample land—and the most excellent sun so calm and haughty—the violet and purple morn with just-felt breezes—the gentle soft-born measureless light—the miracle spreading, bathing all—the fulfill'd noon—the coming eve delicious, and the welcome night and the stars.

And then again they will hear the song of the gray-brown bird in the limitless dusk amid the cedars and pines. Again they will remember the star, and again the odor of the lilac.

But most of all, the song of the bird translated and becoming the chant for death :

A CHANT FOR DEATH.

"Come lovely and soothing death,
Undulate round the world, serenely arriving, arriving,
In the day, in the night, to all, to each,
Sooner or later delicate death.

Prais'd be the fathomless universe,
For life and joy, and for objects and knowledge curious,
And for love, sweet love—but praise! praise! praise!
For the sure-enwinding arms of cool-enfolding death.

Dark mother always gliding near with soft feet,
Have none chanted for thee a chant of fullest welcome?
Then I chant it for thee, I glorify thee above all,
I bring thee a song that when thou must indeed come, come unfalteringly.

Approach strong deliveress,
When it is so, when thou hast taken them I joyously sing the dead,
Lost in the loving floating ocean of thee,
Laved in the flood of thy bliss, O death.

From me to thee glad serenades,
Dances for thee I propose saluting thee, adornments and feastings for thee,
And the sights of the open landscape and the high spread sky are fitting,
And life and the fields, and the huge and thoughtful night

The night in silence under many a star,
The ocean shore and the husky whispering wave whose voice I know,
And the soul turning to thee O vast and well-veil'd death,
And the body gratefully nestling close to thee.

Over the tree-tops I float thee a song,
Over the rising and sinking waves, over the myriad fields and the prairies wide,
Over the dense-pack'd cities all and the teeming wharves and ways,
I float this carol with joy, with joy to thee O death."

This poem, in memory of "the sweetest, wisest soul of all our days and lands," and for whose sake lilac and star and bird entwined, will last as long as the memory of Lincoln.

XII.

OLD AGE.

WALT WHITMAN is not only the poet of childhood, of youth, of manhood, but, above all, of old age. He has not been soured by slander or petrified by prejudice; neither calumny nor flattery has made him revengeful or arrogant. Now sitting by the fireside, in the winter of life,

"His jocund heart still beating in his breast,"

he is just as brave and calm and kind as in his manhood's proudest days, when roses blossomed in his cheeks.

He has taken life's seven steps. Now, as the gamester might say, "on velvet," he is enjoying "old age, expanded, broad, with the haughty breadth of the universe; old age, flowing free, with the delicious near-by freedom of death; old age, superbly rising, welcoming the ineffable aggregation of dying days."

He is taking the "loftiest look at last," and before he goes he utters thanks:

"For health, the midday sun, the impalpable air—for life, mere life,
For precious ever-lingering memories, (of you my mother dear—you, father—you, brothers, sisters, friends,)
For all my days—not those of peace alone—the days of war the same,
For gentle words, caresses, gifts from foreign lands,
For shelter, wine and meat—for sweet appreciation,
(You distant, dim unknown—or young or old—countless, unspecified, readers belov'd,
We never met, and ne'er shall meet—and yet our souls embrace, long, close and long;)
For beings, groups, love, deeds, words, books—for colors, forms,
For all the brave strong men—devoted, hardy men—who've forward sprung in freedom's help, all years, all lands,
For braver, stronger, more devoted men—(a special laurel ere I go, to life's war's chosen ones,
The cannoneers of song and thought—the great artillerists—the foremost leaders, captains of the soul:"

It is a great thing to preach philosophy—far greater to live it. The highest philosophy accepts the inevitable with a smile, and greets it as though it were desired.

To be satisfied: This is wealth—success.

The real philosopher knows that everything has happened that could have happened—consequently he accepts. He is glad that he has lived—glad that

he has had his moment on the stage. In this spirit Whitman has accepted life.

"I shall go forth,
I shall traverse the States awhile, but I cannot tell whither or how long,
Perhaps soon some day or night while I am singing my voice will suddenly cease.

O book, O chants! must all then amount to but this?
Must we barely arrive at this beginning of us?—and yet it is enough, O soul;
O soul, we have positively appear'd—that is enough."

Yes, Walt Whitman has appeared. He has his place upon the stage. The drama is not ended. His voice is still heard. He is the Poet of Democracy—of all people. He is the poet of the body and soul. He has sounded the note of Individuality. He has given the pass-word primeval. He is the Poet of Humanity—of Intellectual Hospitality. He has voiced the aspirations of America—and, above all, he is the poet of Love and Death.

How grandly, how bravely he has given his thought, and how superb is his farewell—his leave-taking:

"After the supper and talk—after the day is done,
As a friend from friends his final withdrawal prolonging,
Good-bye and Good-bye with emotional lips repeating,
(So hard for his hand to release those hands—no more will they meet,
No more for communion of sorrow and joy, of old and young,
A far-stretching journey awaits him, to return no more,)
Shunning, postponing severance—seeking to ward off the last word ever so little,
E'en at the exit-door turning—charges superfluous calling back—e'en as he descends the steps,
Something to eke out a minute additional—shadows of night-fall deepening,
Farewells, messages lessening—dimmer the forthgoer's visage and form,
Soon to be lost for aye in the darkness—loth, O so loth to depart!"

And is this all? Will the forthgoer be lost, and forever? Is death the end? Over the grave bends Love sobbing, and by her side stands Hope and whispers:

We shall meet again. Before all life is death, and after all death is life. The falling leaf, touched with the hectic flush, that testifies of autumn's death, is, in a subtler sense, a prophecy of spring.

Walt Whitman has dreamed great dreams, told

great truths and uttered sublime thoughts. He has held aloft the torch and bravely led the way.

As you read the marvelous book, or the person, called "Leaves of Grass," you feel the freedom of the antique world; you hear the voices of the morning, of the first great singers—voices elemental as those of sea and storm. The horizon enlarges, the heavens grow ample, limitations are forgotten—the realization of the will, the accomplishment of the ideal, seem to be within your power. Obstructions become petty and disappear. The chains and bars are broken, and the distinctions of caste are lost. The soul is in the open air, under the blue and stars —the flag of Nature. Creeds, theories and philosophies ask to be examined, contradicted, reconstructed. Prejudices disappear, superstitions vanish and custom abdicates. The sacred places become highways, duties and desires clasp hands and become comrades and friends. Authority drops the scepter, the priest the mitre, and the purple falls from kings. The inanimate becomes articulate, the meanest and humblest things utter speech, and the dumb and voiceless burst into song. A feeling of independence takes possession of the soul, the body expands, the blood flows full and free, superiors vanish, flattery is a lost art, and life becomes rich, royal, and

superb. The world becomes a personal possession, and the oceans, the continents, and constellations belong to you. You are in the center, everything radiates from you, and in your veins beats and throbs the pulse of all life. You become a rover, careless and free. You wander by the shores of all seas and hear the eternal psalm. You feel the silence of the wide forest, and stand beneath the intertwined and over-arching boughs, entranced with symphonies of winds and woods. You are borne on the tides of eager and swift rivers, hear the rush and roar of cataracts as they fall beneath the seven-hued arch, and watch the eagles as they circling soar. You traverse gorges dark and dim, and climb the scarred and threatening cliffs. You stand in orchards where the blossoms fall like snow, where the birds nest and sing, and painted moths make aimless journeys through the happy air. You live the lives of those who till the earth, and walk amid the perfumed fields, hear the reapers' song, and feel the breadth and scope of earth and sky. You are in the great cities, in the midst of multitudes, of the endless processions. You are on the wide plains—the prairies—with hunter and trapper, with savage and pioneer, and you feel the soft grass yielding under your feet. You sail in many ships, and breathe the free air of

the sea. You travel many roads, and countless paths. You visit palaces and prisons, hospitals and courts; you pity kings and convicts, and your sympathy goes out to all the suffering and insane, the oppressed and enslaved, and even to the infamous. You hear the din of labor, all sounds of factory, field, and forest, of all tools, instruments and machines. You become familiar with men and women of all employments, trades and professions—with birth and burial, with wedding feast and funeral chant. You see the cloud and flame of war, and you enjoy the ineffable perfect days of peace.

In this one book, in these wondrous "Leaves of Grass," you find hints and suggestions, touches and fragments, of all there is of life that lies between the babe, whose rounded cheeks dimple beneath his mother's laughing, loving eyes, and the old man, snow-crowned, who, with a smile, extends his hand to death.

We have met to-night to honor ourselves by honoring the author of "Leaves of Grass."

THE GREAT INFIDELS.

THE GREAT INFIDELS.*

I HAVE sometimes thought that it will not make great and splendid character to rock children in the cradle of hypocrisy. I do not believe that the tendency is to make men and women brave and glorious when you tell them that there are certain ideas upon certain subjects that they must never express; that they must go through life with a pretence as a shield; that their neighbors will think much more of them if they will only keep still; and that above all is a God who despises one who honestly expresses what he believes. For my part, I believe men will be nearer honest in business, in politics, grander in art—in everything that is good and grand and beautiful, if they are taught from the cradle to the coffin to tell their honest opinion.

Neither do I believe thought to be dangerous. It is incredible that only idiots are absolutely sure of salvation. It is incredible that the more brain you have the less your chance is. There can be no danger in honest thought, and if the world ever ad-

*This lecture is printed from notes found among Colonel Ingersoll's papers, but was not revised by him for publication.

vances beyond what it is to-day, it must be led by men who express their real opinions.

We have passed midnight in the great struggle between Fact and Faith, between Science and Superstition. The brand of intellectual inferiority is now upon the orthodox brain. There is nothing grander than to rescue from the leprosy of slander the reputation of a good and generous man. Nothing can be nearer just than to benefit our benefactors.

The Infidels of one age have been the aureoled saints of the next. The destroyers of the old are the creators of the new. The old passes away, and the new becomes old. There is in the intellectual world, as in the material, decay and growth, and ever by the grave of buried age stand youth and joy.

The history of intellectual progress is written in the lives of Infidels. Political rights have been preserved by traitors—the liberty of the mind by heretics. To attack the king was treason—to dispute the priest was blasphemy. The sword and cross were allies. They defended each other. The throne and altar were twins—vultures from the same egg.

It was James I. who said: "No bishop, no king." He might have said: "No cross, no crown."

The king owned the bodies, and the priest the souls, of men. One lived on taxes, the other on

alms. One was a robber, the other a beggar, and each was both.

These robbers and beggars controlled two worlds. The king made laws, the priest made creeds. With bowed backs the people received the burdens of the one, and with wonder's open mouth the dogmas of the other. If any aspired to be free they were crushed by the king, and every priest was a Herod who slaughtered the children of the brain. The king ruled by force, the priest by fear, and both by both.

The king said to the people: "God made you peasants, and he made me king. He made rags and hovels for you, robes and palaces for me. Such is the justice of God." And the priest said: "God made you ignorant and vile. He made me holy and wise. If you do not obey me, God will punish you here and torment you hereafter. Such is the mercy of God."

Infidels are intellectual discoverers. They sail the unknown seas and find new isles and continents in the infinite realms of thought.

An Infidel is one who has found a new fact, who has an idea of his own, and who in the mental sky has seen another star.

He is an intellectual capitalist, and for that reason excites the envy and hatred of the theological pauper.

The Origin of God and Heaven, Of the Devil and Hell.

IN the estimation of good orthodox Christians I am a criminal, because I am trying to take from loving mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, husbands, wives, and lovers the consolations naturally arising from a belief in an eternity of grief and pain. I want to tear, break, and scatter to the winds the God that priests erected in the fields of innocent pleasure —a God made of sticks called creeds, and of old clothes called myths. I shall endeavor to take from the coffin its horror, from the cradle its curse, and put out the fires of revenge kindled by an infinite fiend.

Is it necessary that Heaven should borrow its light from the glare of Hell?

Infinite punishment is infinite cruelty, endless injustice, immortal meanness. To worship an eternal goaler hardens, debases, and pollutes even the

vilest soul. While there is one sad and breaking heart in the universe, no good being can be perfectly happy.

Against the heartlessness of the Christian religion every grand and tender soul should enter solemn protest. The God of Hell should be held in loathing, contempt and scorn. A God who threatens eternal pain should be hated, not loved—cursed, not worshiped. A heaven presided over by such a God must be below the lowest hell. I want no part in any heaven in which the saved, the ransomed and redeemed will drown with shouts of joy the cries and sobs of hell—in which happiness will forget misery, where the tears of the lost only increase laughter and double bliss.

The idea of hell was born of ignorance, brutality, fear, cowardice, and revenge. This idea testifies that our remote ancestors were the lowest beasts. Only from dens, lairs, and caves, only from mouths filled with cruel fangs, only from hearts of fear and hatred, only from the conscience of hunger and lust, only from the lowest and most debased could come this most cruel, heartless and bestial of all dogmas.

Our barbarian ancestors knew but little of nature. They were too astonished to investigate. They

could not divest themselves of the idea that everything happened with reference to them; that they caused storms and earthquakes; that they brought the tempest and the whirlwind; that on account of something they had done, or omitted to do, the lightning of vengeance leaped from the darkened sky. They made up their minds that at least two vast and powerful beings presided over this world; that one was good and the other bad; that both of these beings wished to get control of the souls of men; that they were relentless enemies, eternal foes; that both welcomed recruits and hated deserters; that both demanded praise and worship; that one offered rewards in this world, and the other in the next. The Devil has paid cash—God buys on credit.

Man saw cruelty and mercy in nature, because he imagined that phenomena were produced to punish or to reward him. When his poor hut was torn and broken by the wind, he thought it a punishment. When some town or city was swept away by flood or sea, he imagined that the crimes of the inhabitants had been avenged. When the land was filled with plenty, when the seasons were kind, he thought that he had pleased the tyrant of the skies.

It must be remembered that both gods and devils were supposed to be presided over by the greatest

God and the greatest Devil. The God could give infinite rewards and could inflict infinite torments. The Devil could assist man here; could give him wealth and place in this world, in consideration of owning his soul hereafter. Each human soul was a prize contended for by these deities. Of course this God and this Devil had innumerable spirits at their command, to execute their decrees. The God lived in heaven and the Devil in hell. Both were monarchs and were infinitely jealous of each other. The priests pretended to be the agents and recruiting sergeants of this God, and they were duly authorized to promise and threaten in his name; they had power to forgive and curse. These priests sought to govern the world by force and fear. Believing that men could be frightened into obedience, they magnified the tortures and terrors of perdition. Believing also that man could in part be influenced by the hope of reward, they magnified the joys of heaven. In other words, they promised eternal joy and threatened everlasting pain. Most of these priests, born of the ignorance of the time, believed what they taught. They proved that God was good, by sunlight and harvest, by health and happiness; that he was angry, by disease and death. Man, according to this doctrine, was led astray by the

Devil, who delighted only in evil. It was supposed that God demanded worship; that he loved to be flattered; that he delighted in sacrifice; that nothing made him happier than to see ignorant faith upon its knees; that above all things he hated and despised doubters and heretics, and that he regarded all investigation as rebellion.

Now and then believers in these ideas, those who had gained great reputation for learning and sanctity, or had enjoyed great power, wrote books, and these books after a time were considered sacred. Most of them were written to frighten mankind, and were filled with threatenings and curses for unbelievers and promises for the faithful. The more frightful the curses, the more extravagant the promises, the more sacred the books were considered. All of the gods were cruel and vindictive, unforgiving and relentless, and the devils were substantially the same.

It was also believed that certain things must be accepted as true, no matter whether they were reasonable or not; that it was pleasing to God to believe a certain creed, especially if it happened to be the creed of the majority. Each community felt it a duty to see that the enemies of God were converted or killed. To allow a heretic to live in peace was to invite the wrath of God. Every public evil—

every misfortune—was accounted for by something the community had permitted or done. When epidemics appeared, brought by ignorance and welcomed by filth, the heretic was brought out and sacrificed to appease the vengeance of God. From the knowledge they had—from their premises—they reasoned well. They said, if God will inflict such frightful torments upon us here, simply for allowing a few heretics to live, what will he do with the heretics? Of course the heretics would be punished forever. They knew how cruel was the barbarian king when he had the traitor in his power. They had seen every horror that man could inflict on man. Of course a God could do more than a king. He could punish forever. The fires he would kindle never could be quenched. The torments he would inflict would be eternal. They thought the amount of punishment would be measured only by the power of God.

These ideas were not only prevalent in what are called barbarous times, but they are received by the religious world of to-day.

No death could be conceived more horrible than that produced by flames. To these flames they added eternity, and hell was produced. They exhausted the idea of personal torture.

By putting intention behind what man called good, God was produced. By putting intention behind what man called bad, the Devil was created. Leave this "intention" out, and gods and devils fade away.

If not a human being existed the sun would continue to shine, and tempests now and then would devastate the world; the rain would fall in pleasant showers, and the bow of promise would adorn the cloud; violets would spread their velvet bosoms to the sun, and the earthquake would devour; birds would sing, and daisies bloom, and roses blush, and the volcanoes would fill the heavens with their lurid glare; the procession of the seasons would not be broken, and the stars would shine just as serenely as though the world was filled with loving hearts and happy homes. But in the olden time man thought otherwise. He imagined that he was of great importance. Barbarians are always egotistic. They think that the stars are watching them; that the sun shines on their account; that the rain falls for them, and that gods and devils are really troubling themselves about their poor and ignorant souls.

In those days men fought for their God as they did for their king. They killed the enemies of both. For this their king would reward them here, and

their God hereafter. With them it was loyalty to destroy the disloyal. They did not regard God as a vague "spirit," nor as an "essence" without body or parts, but as a being, a person, an infinite man, a king, the monarch of the universe, who had garments of glory for believers and robes of flame for the heretic and infidel.

Do not imagine that this doctrine of hell belongs to Christianity alone. Nearly all religions have had this dogma for a corner-stone. Upon this burning foundation nearly all have built. Over the abyss of pain rose the glittering dome of pleasure. This world was regarded as one of trial. Here a God of infinite wisdom experimented with man. Between the outstretched paws of the Infinite the mouse, man, was allowed to play. Here man had the opportunity of hearing priests and kneeling in temples. Here he could read and hear read the sacred books. Here he could have the example of the pious and the counsels of the holy. Here he could build churches and cathedrals. Here he could burn incense, fast, wear haircloth, deny himself all the pleasures of life, confess to priests, count beads, be miserable one day in seven, make creeds, construct instruments of torture, bow before pictures and images, eat little square pieces of bread, sprinkle

water on the heads of babes, shut his eyes and say words to the clouds, and slander and defame all who have the courage to despise superstition, and the goodness to tell their honest thoughts. After death, nothing could be done to make him better. When he should come into the presence of God, nothing was left except to damn him. Priests might convert him here, but God could do nothing there,—all of which shows how much more a priest can do for a soul than its creator; how much more potent is the example of your average Christian than that of all the angels, and how much superior earth is to heaven for the moral development of the soul. In heaven the Devil is not allowed to enter. There all are pure and perfect, yet they cannot influence a soul for good.

Only here, on the earth, where the Devil is constantly active, only where his agents attack every soul, is there the slightest hope of moral improvement.

Strange! that a world cursed by God, filled with temptations and thick with fiends, should be the only place where hope exists, the only place where man can repent, the only place where reform is possible! Strange! that heaven, filled with angels and presided over by God, is the only place where reformation is

utterly impossible! Yet these are the teachings of all the believers in the eternity of punishment.

Masters frightened slaves with the threat of hell, and slaves got a kind of shadowy revenge by whispering back the threat. The poor have damned the rich and the rich the poor. The imprisoned imagined a hell for their gaolers; the weak built this place for the strong; the arrogant for their rivals; the vanquished for their victors; the priest for the thinker, religion for reason, superstition for science.

All the meanness, all the revenge, all the selfishness, all the cruelty, all the hatred, all the infamy of which the heart of man is capable, grew, blossomed and bore fruit in this one word—Hell.

For the nourishment of this dogma cruelty was soil, ignorance was rain, and fear was light.

Christians have placed upon the throne of the universe a God of eternal hate. I cannot worship a being whose vengeance is boundless, whose cruelty is shoreless, and whose malice is increased by the agonies he inflicts.

The Appeal to the Cemetery.

WHOEVER attacks a custom or a creed, will be confronted with a list of the names of the dead who upheld the custom, or believed the creed. He is asked in a very triumphant and sneering way, if he knows more than all the great and honored of the past. Every defender of a creed has graven upon his memory the names of all "great" men whose actions or words can be tortured into evidence for his doctrine. The church is always anxious to have some king or president certify to the moral character of Christ, the authority of the Scriptures, and the justice of the Jewish God. Of late years, confessions of gentlemen about to be hanged have been considered of great value, and the scaffold is regarded as a means of grace.

All the churches of our day seek the rich. They are no longer the friends and defenders of the poor. Poverty no longer feels at home in the house of God. In the Temple of the Most High, garments

out of fashion are considered out of place. People now, before confessing to God what worthless souls they have, enrich their bodies. Now words of penitence mingle with the rustle of silk, and light thrown from diamonds adorns the repentant tear. We are told that the rich, the fortunate, the holders of place and office, the fashionable, the respectable, are all within the churches. And yet all these people grow eloquent over the poverty of Christ—boast that he was born in a manger—that the Holy Ghost passed by all the ladies of titled wealth and fashion and selected the wife of a poor and unknown mechanic for the Mother of God.

They admit that all the men of Jerusalem who held high positions—all the people of wealth, influence and power—were the enemies of the Savior and held his pretensions in contempt. They admit that he had influence only with the poor, and that he was so utterly unknown—so indigent in acquaintance, that it was necessary to bribe one of his disciples to point him out to the police. They assert that he had done a great number of miracles—had cured the sick, and raised the dead—that he had preached to vast multitudes—had made a kind of triumphal entry into Jerusalem—had scourged from the temple the changers of money—had dis-

puted with the doctors—and yet, notwithstanding all these things, he remained in the very depths of obscurity. Surely he and his disciples could have been met with the argument that the "great" dead were opposed to the new religion.

The apostles, it is claimed, preached the doctrines of Christ in Rome and Athens, and the people of those cities could have used the arguments against Christianity that Christians now use in its support. They could have asked the apostles if they were wiser than all the philosophers, poets, orators, and statesmen dead—if they knew more, coming as they did from a weak and barbarous nation, than the greatest men produced by the highest civilization of the known world. With what scorn would the Greeks listen to a barbarian's criticisms upon Socrates and Plato. How a Roman would laugh to hear a vagrant Hebrew attack a mythology that had been believed by Cato and Virgil.

Every new religion has to overcome this argument of the cemetery—this logic of the grave. Old ideas take shelter behind a barricade of corpses and tombstones. They have epitaphs for battle-cries, and malign the living in the name of the

dead. The moment, however, that a new religion succeeds, it becomes the old religion and uses the same argument against a new idea that it once so gallantly refuted. The arguments used to-day against what they are pleased to call infidelity would have shut the mouth of every religious reformer, from Christ to the founder of the last sect. The general objection to the new is, that it differs somewhat from the old, and the fact that it does differ is urged as an argument against its truth.

Every man is forced to admit that he does not agree with all the great men, living or dead. The average Catholic, if not a priest, as a rule will admit that Sir Isaac Newton was in some things his superior, that Demosthenes had the advantage of him in expressing his ideas in public, and that as a sculptor he is far below the unknown man of whose hand and brain was born the Venus de Milo, but he will not, on account of these admissions, change his views upon the important question of transubstantiation.

Most Protestants will cheerfully admit that they are inferior in brain and genius to some men who have lived and died in the Catholic Church; that in the matter of preaching funeral sermons they

do not pretend to equal Bossuet; that their letters are not so interesting and polished as those of Pascal; that Torquemada excelled them in the genius of organization, and that for planning a massacre they would not for a moment dispute the palm with Catherine de Medici.

And yet, after all these admissions, they would insist that the Pope is an unblushing impostor, and that the Catholic Church is a vampire fattened by the best blood of a thousand years.

The truth is, that in favor of almost every sect, the names of some great men can be pronounced. In almost every church there have been men whose only weakness was their religion, and who in other directions achieved distinction. If you call men great because they were emperors, kings, noblemen, statesmen, millionaires—because they commanded vast armies and wielded great influence in their day, then more names can be found to support and prop the Church of Rome than any other Christian sect.

Is Protestantism willing to rest its claims upon the "great man" argument? Give me the ideas, the religions, not that have been advanced and believed by the so-called great of the past, but that will be defended and believed by the great souls of the future.

It gives me pleasure to say that Lord Bacon was a great man; but I do not for that reason abandon the Copernican system of astronomy, and insist that the earth is stationary. Samuel Johnson was an excellent writer of latinized English, but I am confident that he never saw a real ghost. Matthew Hale was a reasonably good judge of law, but he was mistaken about witches causing children to vomit crooked pins. John Wesley was quite a man, in a kind of religious way, but in this country few people sympathize with his hatred of republican government, or with his contempt for the Revolutionary Fathers. Sir Isaac Newton, in the domain of science, was the colossus of his time, but his commentary on the book of Revelation would hardly excite envy, even in the breast of a Spurgeon or a Talmage. Upon many questions, the opinions of Napoleon were of great value, and yet about his bed, when dying, he wanted to see burning the holy candles of Rome. John Calvin has been called a logician, and reasoned well from his premises, but the burning of Servetus did not make murder a virtue. Luther weakened somewhat the power of the Catholic Church, and to that extent was a reformer, and yet Lord Brougham affirmed that his "Table Talk" was so obscene that no

respectable English publisher would soil paper with a translation. He was a kind of religious Rabelais; and yet a man can defend Luther in his attack upon the church without justifying his obscenity. If every man in the Catholic Church was a good man, that would not convince me that Ignatius Loyola ever met and conversed with the Virgin Mary. The fact is, very few men are right in everything, Great virtues may draw attention from defects, but they cannot sanctify them. A pebble surrounded by diamonds remains a common stone, and a diamond surrounded by pebbles is still a gem. No one should attempt to refute an argument by pronouncing the name of some man, unless he is willing to adopt all the ideas and beliefs of that man. It is better to give reasons and facts than names. An argument should not depend for its force upon the name of its author. Facts need no pedigree; logic has no heraldry, and the living should not be awed by the mistakes of the dead.

The greatest men the world has produced have known but little. They had a few facts, mingled with mistakes without number. In some departments they towered above their fellows, while in others they fell below the common level of mankind.

Daniel Webster had great respect for the Scrip-

tures, but very little for the claims of his creditors. Most men are strangely inconsistent. Two propositions were introduced into the Confederate Congress by the same man. One was to hoist the black flag, and the other was to prevent carrying the mails on Sunday. George Whitefield defended the slave trade, because it brought the negroes within the sound of the gospel, and gave them the advantage of associating with the gentlemen who stole them. And yet this same Whitefield believed and taught the dogma of predestination. Volumes might be written upon the follies and imbecilities of great men. A full rounded man—a man of sterling sense and natural logic—is just as rare as a great painter, poet, or sculptor. If you tell your friend that he is not a painter, that he has no genius for poetry, he will probably admit the truth of what you say, without feeling that he has been insulted in the least. But if you tell him that he is not a logician, that he has but little idea of the value of a fact, that he has no real conception of what evidence is, and that he never had an original thought in his life, he will cut your acquaintance. Thousands of men are most wonderful in mechanics, in trade, in certain professions, keen in business, knowing well the men among whom they live, and yet satisfied with relig-

ions infinitely stupid, with politics perfectly senseless, and they will believe that wonderful things were common long ago, such things as no amount of evidence could convince them had happened in their day. A man may be a successful merchant, lawyer, doctor, mechanic, statesman, or theologian without one particle of originality, and almost without the ability to think logically upon any subject whatever. Other men display in some directions the most marvelous intellectual power, astonish mankind with their grasp and vigor, and at the same time, upon religious subjects drool and drivel like David at the gates of Gath.

Sacred Books.

WE have found, at last, that other nations have sacred books much older than our own, and that these books and records were and are substantiated by traditions and monuments, by miracles and martyrs, christs and apostles, as well as by prophecies fulfilled. In all of these nations differences of opinion as to the authenticity and meaning of these books arose from time to time, precisely as they have done and still do with us, and upon these differences were founded sects that manufactured creeds. These sects denounced each other, and preached with the sword and endeavored to convince with the fagot. Our theologians were greatly astonished to find in other bibles the same stories, precepts, laws, customs and commands that adorn and stain our own. At first they accounted for this, by saying that these books were in part copies of the Jewish Scriptures, mingled

with barbaric myths. To such an extent did they impose upon and insult probability, that they declared that all the morality of the world, all laws commanding right and prohibiting wrong, all ideas respecting the unity of a Supreme Being, were borrowed from the Jews, who obtained them directly from God. The Christian world asserts with warmth, not always born of candor, that the Bible is the source, origin, and fountain of law, liberty, love, charity, and justice; that it is the intellectual and moral sun of the world; that it alone gives happiness here, and alone points out the way to joy hereafter; that it contains the only revelation from the Infinite; that all others are the work of dishonest and mistaken men. They say these things in spite of the fact that the Jewish nation was one of the weakest and most barbaric of the past; in spite of the fact that the civilization of Egypt and India had commenced to wane before that of Palestine existed. To account for all the morality contained in the sacred books of the Hindus by saying that it was borrowed from the wanderers in the Desert of Sinai, from the escaped slaves of the Egyptians, taxes to the utmost the credulity of ignorance, bigotry, and zeal.

The men who make these assertions are not

superior to other men. They have only the facts common to all, and they must admit that these facts do not force the same conclusions upon all. They must admit that men equally honest, equally well informed as themselves, deny their premises and conclusions. They must admit that had they been born and educated in some other country, they would have had a different religion, and would have regarded with reverence and awe the books they now hold as false and foolish. Most men are followers, and implicitly rely upon the judgment of others. They mistake solemnity for wisdom, and regard a grave countenance as the titlepage and preface to a most learned volume. So they are easily imposed upon by forms, strange garments, and solemn ceremonies. And when the teaching of parents, the customs of neighbors, and the general tongue approve and justify a belief or creed, no matter how absurd, it is hard even for the strongest to hold the citadel of his soul. In each country, in defence of each religion, the same arguments would be urged. There is the same evidence in favor of the inspiration of the Koran and Bible. Both are substantiated in exactly the same way. It is just as wicked and unreasonable to be a heretic in Constantinople as in New

York. To deny the claims of Christ and Mohammed is alike blasphemous. It all depends upon where you are when you make the denial. No religion has ever fallen that carried with it down to dumb death a solitary fact. Mistakes moulder with the temples in which they were taught, and countless superstitions sleep with their dead priests.

Yet Christians insist that the religions of all nations that have fallen from wealth and power were false, with of course the solitary exception of the Jewish, simply because the nations teaching them dropped from their dying hands the swords of power. This argument drawn from the fate of nations proves no more than would one based upon the history of persons. With nations as with individuals, the struggle for life is perpetual, and the law of the survival of the fittest applies equally to both.

It may be that the fabric of our civilization will crumbling fall to unmeaning chaos and to formless dust, where oblivion broods and even memory forgets. Perhaps the blind Samson of some imprisoned force, released by thoughtless chance, may so wreck and strand the world that man, in stress and strain of want and fear, will

shudderingly crawl back to savage and barbaric night. The time may come in which this thrilled and throbbing earth, shorn of all life, will in its soundless orbit wheel a barren star, on which the light will fall as fruitlessly as falls the gaze of love upon the cold, pathetic face of death.

FEAR.

THERE is a view quite prevalent, that in some way you can prove whether the theories defended or advanced by a man are right or not, by showing what kind of man he was, what kind of life he lived, and what manner of death he died.

A man entertains certain opinions; he is persecuted. He refuses to change his mind; he is burned, and in the midst of flames cries out that he dies without change. Hundreds then say that he has sealed his testimony with his blood, and his doctrines must be true.

All the martyrs in the history of the world are not sufficient to establish the correctness of an opinion. Martyrdom, as a rule, establishes the sincerity of the martyr,—never the correctness of his thought. Things are true or false in themselves. Truth cannot be affected by opinions; it cannot be changed, established, or affected by martyrdom. An error cannot be believed sincerely enough to make it a truth.

No Christian will admit that any amount of heroism displayed by a Mormon is sufficient to prove that Joseph Smith was divinely inspired. All the courage and culture, all the poetry and art of ancient Greece, do not even tend to establish the truth of any myth.

The testimony of the dying concerning some other world, or in regard to the supernatural, cannot be any better, to say the least, than that of the living. In the early days of Christianity a serene and intrepid death was regarded as a testimony in favor of the church. At that time Pagans were being converted to Christianity—were throwing Jupiter away and taking the Hebrew God instead. In the moment of death many of these converts, without doubt, retraced their steps and died in the faith of their ancestors. But whenever one died clinging to the cross of the new religion, this was seized upon as an evidence of the truth of the gospel. After a time the Christians taught that an unbeliever, one who spoke or wrote against their doctrines, could not meet death with composure—that the infidel in his last moments would necessarily be a prey to the serpent of remorse. For more than a thousand years they have made the "facts" to fit this theory. Crimes against men have been considered as nothing

when compared with a denial of the truth of the Bible, the divinity of Christ, or the existence of God.

According to the theologians, God has always acted in this way. As long as men did nothing except to render their fellows wretched; as long as they only butchered and burnt the innocent and helpless, God maintained the strictest and most heartless neutrality; but when some honest man, some great and tender soul expressed a doubt as to the truth of the Scriptures, or prayed to the wrong God, or to the right one by the wrong name, then the real God leaped like a wounded tiger upon his victim, and from his quivering flesh tore his wretched soul.

There is no recorded instance where the uplifted hand of murder has been paralyzed—no truthful account in all the literature of the world of the innocent being shielded by God. Thousands of crimes are committed every day—men are this moment lying in wait for their human prey—wives are whipped and crushed, driven to insanity and death—little children begging for mercy, lifting imploring, tear-filled eyes to the brutal faces of fathers and mothers—sweet girls are deceived, lured, and outraged, but God has no time to prevent these things—no time to defend the good and to protect the pure. He is too busy numbering hairs and watching sparrows.

He listens for blasphemy; looks for persons who laugh at priests; examines baptismal registers; watches professors in colleges who begin to doubt the geology of Moses and the astronomy of Joshua. He does not particularly object to stealing if you won't swear. A great many persons have fallen dead in the act of taking God's name in vain, but millions of men, women, and children have been stolen from their homes and used as beasts of burden, but no one engaged in this infamy has ever been touched by the wrathful hand of God.

All kinds of criminals, except infidels, meet death with reasonable serenity. As a rule, there is nothing in the death of a pirate to cast any discredit on his profession. The murderer upon the scaffold, with a priest on either side, smilingly exhorts the multitude to meet him in heaven. The man who has succeeded in making his home a hell, meets death without a quiver, provided he has never expressed any doubt as to the divinity of Christ, or the eternal "procession" of the Holy Ghost. The king who has waged cruel and useless war, who has filled countries with widows and fatherless children, with the maimed and diseased, and who has succeeded in offering to the Moloch of ambition the best and bravest of his subjects, dies like a saint.

The Emperor Constantine, who lifted Christianity into power, murdered his wife Fausta, and his eldest son Crispus, the same year that he convened the Council of Nice to decide whether Jesus Christ was a man or the Son of God. The council decided that Christ was consubstantial with the Father. This was in the year 325. We are thus indebted to a wife-murderer for settling the vexed question of the divinity of the Savior. Theodosius called a council at Constantinople in 381, and this council decided that the Holy Ghost proceeded from the Father. Theodosius, the younger, assembled another council at Ephesus to ascertain who the Virgin Mary really was, and it was solemnly decided in the year 431 that she was the Mother of God. In 451 it was decided by a council held at Chalcedon, called together by the Emperor Marcian, that Christ had two natures—the human and divine. In 680, in another general council, held at Constantinople, convened by order of Pognatius, it was also decided that Christ had two wills, and in the year 1274 it was decided at the Council of Lyons, that the Holy Ghost proceeded not only from the Father, but from the Son as well. Had it not been for these councils, we might have been without a Trinity even unto this day. When we take into consideration the fact that a belief in

the Trinity is absolutely essential to salvation, how unfortunate it was for the world that this doctrine was not established until the year 1274. Think of the millions that dropped into hell while these questions were being discussed.

This, however, is a digression. Let us go back to Constantine. This Emperor, stained with every crime, is supposed to have died like a Christian. We hear nothing of fiends leering at him in the shadows of death. He does not see the forms of his murdered wife and son covered with the blood he shed. From his white and shrivelled lips issued no shrieks of terror. He does not cover his glazed eyes with thin and trembling hands to shut out the visions of hell. His chamber is filled with the rustle of wings—of wings waiting to bear his soul to the thrilling realms of joy.

Against the Emperor Constantine the church has hurled no anathema. She has accepted the story of his vision in the clouds, and his holy memory has been guarded by priest and pope. All the persecutors sleep in peace, and the ashes of those who burned their brothers in the name of Christ rest in consecrated ground. Whole libraries could not contain even the names of the wretches who have filled the world with violence and death in defence of book

and creed, and yet they all died the death of the righteous, and no priest or minister describes the agony and fear, the remorse and horror, with which their guilty souls were filled in the last moments of their lives. These men had never doubted—they accepted the creed—they were not infidels—they had not denied the divinity of Christ—they had been baptized—they had partaken of the Last Supper—they had respected priests—they admitted that the Holy Ghost had "proceeded," and these things put pillows beneath their dying heads, and covered them with the drapery of peace.

Now and then, in the history of this world, a man of genius, of sense, of intellectual honesty has appeared. These men have denounced the superstitions of their day. They pitied the multitude. To see priests devour the substance of the people filled them with indignation. These men were honest enough to tell their thoughts. Then they were denounced, tried, condemned, executed. Some of them escaped the fury of the people who loved their enemies, and died naturally in their beds.

It would not do for the church to admit that they died peacefully. That would show that religion was not actually necessary in the last moment. Religion got much of its power from the terror of death.

THE DEATH TEST

YOU had better live well and die wicked. You had better live well and die cursing than live badly and die praying.

It would not do to have the common people understand that a man could deny the Bible, refuse to look at the cross, contend that Christ was only a man, and yet die as calmly as Calvin did after he had murdered Servetus, or as did King David after advising one son to kill another.

The church has taken great pains to show that the last moments of all infidels (that Christians did not succeed in burning) were infinitely wretched and despairing. It was alleged that words could not paint the horrors that were endured by a dying infidel. Every good Christian was expected to, and generally did, believe these accounts. They have been told and retold in every pulpit of the world. Protestant ministers have repeated the inventions of Catholic priests, and Catholics, by a kind of theolog-

ical comity, have sworn to the falsehoods told by Protestants. Upon this point they have always stood together, and will as long as the same calumny can be used by both.

Upon the death-bed subject the clergy grow eloquent. When describing the shudderings and shrieks of the dying unbeliever, their eyes glitter with delight.

It is a festival.

They are no longer men. They become hyenas. They dig open graves. They devour the reputations of the dead.

It is a banquet.

Unsatisfied still, they paint the terrors of hell. They gaze at the souls of the infidels writhing in the coils of the worm that never dies. They see them in flames—in oceans of fire—in gulfs of pain—in abysses of despair. They shout with joy. They applaud.

It is an *auto da fe,* presided over by God and his angels.

The men they thus describe were not atheists; they were all believers in God, in special providence, and in the immortality of the soul. They believed in the accountability of man—in the practice of virtue, in justice, and liberty, but they did not believe in that collection of follies and fables called the Bible.

In order to show that an infidel must die overwhelmed with remorse and fear, they have generally selected from all the "unbelievers" since the day of Christ five men—the Emperor Julian, Spinoza, Voltaire, Diderot, David Hume, and Thomas Paine.

Hardly a minister in the United States has attempted to "answer" me without referring to the death of one or more of these men.

In vain have these calumniators of the dead been called upon to prove their statements. In vain have rewards been offered to any priestly maligner to bring forward the evidence.

Let us once for all dispose of these slanders—of these pious calumnies.

JULIAN.

THEY say that the Emperor Julian was an "apostate;" that he was once a Christian; that he fell from grace, and that in his last moments, throwing some of his own blood into the air, he cried out to Jesus Christ, "Galilean, thou hast conquered!"

It must be remembered that the Christians had persecuted and imprisoned this very Julian; that they had exiled him; that they had threatened him with death. Many of his relatives were murdered by the Christians. He became emperor, and Christians conspired to take his life. The conspirators were discovered and they were pardoned. He did what he could to prevent the Christians from destroying each other. He held pomp and pride and luxury in contempt, and led his army on foot, sharing the privations of the meanest soldier.

Upon ascending the throne he published an edict proclaiming universal religious toleration. He was

then a Pagan. It is claimed by some that he never did entirely forget his Christian education. In this I am inclined to think there is some truth, because he revoked his edict of toleration, and for a time was nearly as unjust as though he had been a saint. He was emperor one year and seven months. In a battle with the Persians he was mortally wounded. "Brought back to his tent, and feeling that he had but a short time to live, he spent his last hours in discoursing with his friends on the immortality of the soul. He reviewed his reign and declared that he was satisfied with his conduct, and had neither penitence nor remorse to express for anything that he had done." His last words were: "I submit willingly to the eternal decrees of heaven, convinced that he who is captivated with life, when his last hour has arrived is more weak and pusillanimous than he who would rush to voluntary death when it is his duty still to live."

When we remember that a Christian emperor murdered Julian's father and most of his kindred, and that he narrowly escaped the same fate, we can hardly blame him for having a little prejudice against a church whose members were fierce, ignorant, and bloody—whose priests were hypocrites, and whose bishops were assassins. If Julian had

said he was a Christian—no matter what he actually was, he would have satisfied the church.

The story that the dying emperor acknowledged that he was conquered by the Galilean was originated by some of the so-called Fathers of the Church, probably by Gregory or Theodoret. They are the same wretches who said that Julian sacrificed a woman to the moon, tearing out her entrails with his own hands. We are also informed by these hypocrites that he endeavored to rebuild the temple of Jerusalem, and that fire came out of the earth and consumed the laborers employed in the sacrilegious undertaking.

I did not suppose that an intelligent man could be found in the world who believed this childish fable, and yet in the January number for 1880, of the *Princeton Review*, the Rev. Stuart Robinson (whoever he may be) distinctly certifies to the truth of this story. He says: "Throughout the entire era of the planting of the Christian Church, the gospel preached was assailed not only by the malignant fanaticism of the Jew and the violence of Roman statecraft, but also by the intellectual weapons of philosophers, wits, and poets. Now Celsus denounced the new religion as base imposture. Now Tacitus described it as but another phase of

the *odium generis humani. Now Julian proposed to bring into contempt the prophetic claims of its founder by the practical test of rebuilding the Temple.*" Here then in the year of grace 1880 is a Presbyterian preacher, who really believes that Julian tried to rebuild the Temple, and that God caused fire to issue from the earth and consume the innocent workmen.

All these stories rest upon the same foundation—the mendacity of priests.

Julian changed the religion of the Empire, and diverted the revenues of the church. Whoever steps between a priest and his salary, will find that he has committed every crime. No matter how often the slanders may be refuted, they will be repeated until the last priest has lost his body and found his wings. These falsehoods about Julian were invented some fifteen hundred years ago, and they are repeated to-day by just as honest and just as respectable people as those who told them at first. Whenever the church cannot answer the arguments of an opponent, she attacks his character. She resorts to falsehood, and in the domain of calumny she has stood for fifteen hundred years without a rival.

The great Empire was crumbling to its fall. The

literature of the world was being destroyed by priests. The gods and goddesses were driven from the earth and sky. The paintings were torn and defaced. The statues were broken. The walls were left desolate, and the niches empty. Art, like Rachel, wept for her children, and would not be comforted. The streams and forests were deserted by the children of the imagination, and the whole earth was barren, poor and mean.

Christian ignorance, bigotry and hatred, in blind unreasoning zeal, had destroyed the treasures of our race. Art was abhorred, Knowledge was despised, Reason was an outcast. The sun was blotted from the intellectual heaven, every star extinguished, and there fell upon the world that shadow—that midnight,—known as "The Dark Ages."

This night lasted for a thousand years.

The First Great Star—Herald of the Dawn—was Bruno.

BRUNO.

THE night of the Middle Ages lasted for a thousand years. The first star that enriched the horizon of this universal gloom was Giordano Bruno. He was the herald of the dawn.

He was born in 1550, was educated for a priest, became a Dominican friar. At last his reason revolted against the doctrine of transubstantiation. He could not believe that the entire Trinity was in a wafer, or in a swallow of wine. He could not believe that a man could devour the Creator of the universe by eating a piece of bread. This led him to investigate other dogmas of the Catholic Church, and in every direction he found the same contradictions and impossibilities supported, not by reason, but by faith.

Those who loved their enemies threatened his life. He was obliged to flee from his native land, and he became a vagabond in nearly every nation of Europe. He declared that he fought, not what priests believed, but what they pretended to believe. He was driven from his native country because of his astronomical opinions. He had lost confidence in the Bible as a scientific work. He was in danger because he had discovered a truth.

He fled to England. He gave some lectures at

Oxford. He found that institution controlled by priests. He found that they were teaching nothing of importance—only the impossible and the hurtful. He called Oxford "the widow of true learning." There were in England, at that time, two men who knew more than the rest of the world. Shakespeare was then alive.

Bruno was driven from England. He was regarded as a dangerous man,—he had opinions, he inquired after reasons, he expressed confidence in facts. He fled to France. He was not allowed to remain in that country. He discussed things—that was enough. The church said, "move on." He went to Germany. He was not a believer—he was an investigator. The Germans wanted believers; they regarded the whole Christian system as settled; they wanted witnesses; they wanted men who would assert. So he was driven from Germany.

He returned at last to his native land. He found himself without friends, because he had been true, not only to himself, but to the human race. But the world was false to him because he refused to crucify the Christ of his own soul between the two thieves of hypocrisy and bigotry. He was arrested for teaching that there are other worlds than this; that many of the stars are suns, around which other worlds revolve; that Nature did not exhaust all her

energies on this grain of sand called the earth. He believed in a plurality of worlds, in the rotation of this, in the heliocentric theory. For these crimes, and for these alone, he was imprisoned for six years. He was kept in solitary confinement. He was allowed no books, no friends, no visitors. He was denied pen and paper. In the darkness, in the loneliness, he had time to examine the great questions of origin, of existence, of destiny. He put to the test what is called the goodness of God. He found that he could neither depend upon man nor upon any deity. At last, the Inquisition demanded him. He was tried, condemned, excommunicated and sentenced to be burned. According to Professor Draper, he believed that this world is animated by an intelligent soul—the cause of forms, but not of matter; that it lives in all things, even in such as seem not to live; that everything is ready to become organized; that matter is the mother of forms, and then their grave; that matter and the soul of things, together, constitute God. He was a pantheist—that is to say, an atheist. He was a lover of Nature,—a reaction from the asceticism of the church. He was tired of the gloom of the monastery. He loved the fields, the woods, the streams. He said to his brother-priests: Come out of your cells, out of your dungeons: come into the air and light.

Throw away your beads and your crosses. Gather flowers; mingle with your fellow-men; have wives and children; scatter the seeds of joy; throw away the thorns and nettles of your creeds; enjoy the perpetual miracle of life.

On the sixteenth day of February, in the year of grace 1600, by "the triumphant beast," the Church of Rome, this philosopher, this great and splendid man, was burned. He was offered his liberty if he would recant. There was no God to be offended by his recantation, and yet, as an apostle of what he believed to be the truth, he refused this offer. To those who passed the sentence upon him he said: "It is with greater fear that ye pass this sentence upon me than I receive it." This man, greater than any naturalist of his day; grander than the martyr of any religion, died willingly in defence of what he believed to be the sacred truth. He was great enough to know that real religion will not destroy the joy of life on earth; great enough to know that investigation is not a crime—that the really useful is not hidden in the mysteries of faith. He knew that the Jewish records were below the level of the Greek and Roman myths; that there is no such thing as special providence; that prayer is useless; that liberty and necessity are the same, and that good and evil are but relative.

He was the first real martyr,—neither frightened by perdition, nor bribed by heaven. He was the first of all the world who died for truth without expectation of reward. He did not anticipate a crown of glory. His imagination had not peopled the heavens with angels waiting for his soul. He had not been promised an eternity of joy if he stood firm, nor had he been threatened with the fires of hell if he wavered and recanted. He expected as his reward an eternal nothing! Death was to him an everlasting end—nothing beyond but a sleep without a dream, a night without a star, without a dawn —nothing but extinction, blank, utter, and eternal. No crown, no palm, no "well done, good and faithful servant," no shout of welcome, no song of praise, no smile of God, no kiss of Christ, no mansion in the fair skies—not even a grave within the earth—nothing but ashes, wind-blown and priest-scattered, mixed with earth and trampled beneath the feet of men and beasts.

The murder of this man will never be completely and perfectly avenged until from Rome shall be swept every vestige of priest and pope, until over the shapeless ruin of St. Peter's, the crumbled Vatican and the fallen cross, shall rise a monument to Bruno,—the thinker, philosopher, philanthropist, atheist, martyr.

THE CHURCH IN THE TIME OF VOLTAIRE.

WHEN Voltaire was born, the natural was about the only thing in which the church did not believe. The monks sold little amulets of consecrated paper. They would cure diseases. If laid in a cradle they would prevent a child being bewitched. So, they could be put into houses and barns to keep devils away, or buried in a field to prevent bad weather, to delay frost, and to insure good crops. There was a regular formulary by which they were made, ending with a prayer, after which the amulets were sprinkled with holy water. The church contended that its servants were the only legitimate physicians. The priests cured in the name of the church, and in the name of God, by exorcism, relics, water, salt, and oil. St. Valentine cured epilepsy, St. Gervasius was good for rheumatism, St. Michæl de Sanatis for cancer, St. Judas for coughs, St. Ovidius for deafness, St. Sebastian for poisonous bites, St. Apollonia for toothache, St. Clara for rheum in the eye, St. Hubert for

hydrophobia. Devils were driven out with wax tapers, with incense, with holy water, by pronouncing prayers. The church, as late as the middle of the twelfth century, prohibited good Catholics from having anything to do with physicians.

It was believed that the devils produced storms of wind, of rain and of fire from heaven; that the atmosphere was a battlefield between angels and devils; that Lucifer had power to destroy fields and vineyards and dwellings, and the principal business of the church was to protect the people from the Devil. This was the origin of church bells. These bells were sprinkled with holy water, and their clangor cleared the air of imps and fiends. The bells also prevented storms and lightning. The church used to anathematize insects. In the sixteenth century, regular suits were commenced against rats, and judgment was rendered. Every monastery had its master magician, who sold magic incense, salt, and tapers, consecrated palms and relics.

Every science was regarded as an outcast, an enemy. Every fact held the creed of the church in scorn. Investigators were enemies in disguise. Thinkers were traitors, and the church exerted its vast power for centuries to prevent the intellectual progress of man. There was no liberty, no educa-

tion, no philosophy, no science; nothing but credulity, ignorance, and superstition. The world was really under the control of Satan and his agents. The church, for the purpose of increasing her power, exhausted every means to convince the people of the existence of witches, devils, and fiends. In this way the church had every enemy within her power. She simply had to charge him with being a wizard, of holding communication with devils, and the ignorant mob were ready to tear him to pieces.

To such an extent was this frightful course pursued, and such was the prevalence of the belief in the supernatural, that the worship of the devil was absolutely established. The poor people, brutalized by the church, filled with fear of Satanic influence, finding that the church did not protect, as a last resort began to worship the Devil. The power of the Devil was proven by the Bible. The history of Job, the temptation of Christ in the desert, the carrying of Christ to the top of the temple, and hundreds of other instances, were relied upon as establishing his power; and when people laughed about witches riding upon anointed sticks in the air, invisible, they were reminded of a like voyage when the Devil carried Jesus to the pinnacle of the temple.

This frightful doctrine filled every friend with suspicion of his friend. It made the husband denounce

the wife, the children the parents, and the parents the children. It destroyed all the sweet relations of humanity. It did away with justice in the courts. It destroyed the charity of religion. It broke the bond of friendship. It filled with poison the golden cup of life. It turned earth into a very hell, peopled with ignorant, tyrannical, and malicious demons.

Such was the result of a few centuries of Christianity. Such was the result of a belief in the supernatural. Such was the result of giving up the evidence of our own senses, and relying upon dreams, visions, and fears. Such was the result of destroying human reason, of depending upon the supernatural, of living here for another world instead of for this, of depending upon priests instead of upon ourselves. The Protestants vied with the Catholics. Luther stood side by side with the priests he had deserted, in promoting this belief in devils and fiends. To the Catholic, every Protestant was possessed by a devil. To the Protestant, every Catholic was the homestead of a fiend. All order, all regular succession of causes and effects, were known no more. The natural ceased to exist. The learned and the ignorant were on a level. The priest had been caught in the net spread for the peasant, and Christendom was a vast madhouse, with insane priests for keepers.

VOLTAIRE.

WHEN Voltaire was born, the church ruled and owned France. It was a period of almost universal corruption. The priests were mostly libertines. The judges were nearly as cruel as venal. The royal palace was simply a house of assignation. The nobles were heartless, proud, arrogant, and cruel to the last degree. The common people were treated as beasts. It took the church a thousand years to bring about this happy condition of things.

The seeds of the revolution unconsciously were being scattered by every noble and by every priest. They germinated in the hearts of the helpless. They were watered by the tears of agony. Blows began to bear interest. There was a faint longing for blood. Workmen, blackened by the sun, bent by labor, looked at the white throats of scornful ladies and thought about cutting them.

In those days witnesses were cross-examined with instruments of torture. The church was the arsenal of superstition. Miracles, relics, angels and devils were as common as rags. Voltaire laughed at the

evidences, attacked the pretended facts, held the Bible up to ridicule, and filled Europe with indignant protests against the cruelty, bigotry, and injustice of the time.

He was a believer in God, and in some ingenious way excused this God for allowing the Catholic Church to exist. He had an idea that, originally, mankind were believers in one God, and practiced all the virtues. Of course this was a mistake. He imagined that the church had corrupted the human race. In this he was right.

It may be that, at one time, the church relatively stood for progress, but when it gained power, it became an obstruction. The system of Voltaire was contradictory. He described a being of infinite goodness, who not only destroyed his children with pestilence and famine, but allowed them to destroy each other. While rejecting the God of the Bible, he accepted another God, who, to say the least, allowed the innocent to be burned for loving him.

Voltaire hated tyranny, and loved liberty. His arguments to prove the existence of a God were just as groundless as those of the reverend fathers of his day to prove the divinity of Christ, or that Mary was the mother of God. The theologians of his time maligned and feared him. He regarded them

as a spider does flies. He spread nets for them. They were caught, and he devoured them for the amusement and benefit of the public. He was educated by the Jesuits, and sometimes acted like one.

It is fashionable to say that he was not profound. This is because he was not stupid. In the presence of absurdity he laughed, and was called irreverent. He thought God would not damn even a priest forever: this was regarded as blasphemy. He endeavored to prevent Christians from murdering each other and did what he could to civilize the disciples of Christ. Had he founded a sect, obtained control of some country, and burned a few heretics at slow fires, he would have won the admiration, respect and love of the Christian world. Had he only pretended to believe all the fables of antiquity, had he mumbled Latin prayers, counted beads, crossed himself, devoured the flesh of God, and carried fagots to the feet of philosophy in the name of Christ, he might have been in heaven this moment, enjoying a sight of the damned.

Instead of doing these things, he willfully closed his eyes to the light of the gospel, examined the Bible for himself, advocated intellectual liberty, struck from the brain the fetters of an arrogant faith, assisted the weak, cried out against the torture of man,

appealed to reason, endeavored to establish universal toleration, succored the indigent, and defended the oppressed.

These were his crimes. Such a man God would not suffer to die in peace. If allowed to meet death with a smile, others might follow his example, until none would be left to light the holy fires of the *auto da fe*. It would not do for so great, so successful an enemy of the church, to die without leaving some shriek of fear, some shudder of remorse, some ghastly prayer of chattered horror, uttered by lips covered with blood and foam.

He was an old man of eighty-four. He had been surrounded with the comforts of life ; he was a man of wealth, of genius. Among the literary men of the world he stood first. God had allowed him to have the appearance of success. His last years were filled with the intoxication of flattery. He stood at the summit of his age.

The priests became anxious. They began to fear that God would forget, in a multiplicity of business, to make a terrible example of Voltaire.

Toward the last of May, 1778, it was whispered in Paris that Voltaire was dying. Upon the fences of expectation gathered the unclean birds of superstition, impatiently waiting for their prey.

"Two days before his death, his nephew went to seek the curé of Saint Sulpice and the Abbé Gautier and brought them into his uncle's sick chamber, who was informed that they were there. 'Ah, well!' said Voltaire, 'give them my compliments and my thanks.' The Abbé spoke some words to him, exhorting him to patience. The curé of Saint Sulpice then came forward, having announced himself, and asked of Voltaire, elevating his voice, if he acknowledged the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ. The sick man pushed one of his hands against the curé's coif, shoving him back, and cried, turning abruptly to the other side, 'Let me die in peace.' The curé seemingly considered his person soiled, and his coif dishonored, by the touch of the philosopher. He made the nurse give him a little brushing, and went out with the Abbé Gautier."

He expired, says Wagniere, on the 30th of May, 1778, at about a quarter past eleven at night, with the most perfect tranquillity. Ten minutes before his last breath he took the hand of Morand, his *valet de chambre*, who was watching by him, pressed it and said: "Adieu, my dear Morand, I am gone." These were his last words.

From this death, so simple and serene, so natural and peaceful; from these words so utterly destitute

of cant or dramatic touch, all the frightful pictures, all the despairing utterances, have been drawn and made. From these materials, and from these alone, have been constructed all the shameless lies about the death of this great and wonderful man, compared with whom all of his calumniators, dead and living, were and are but dust and vermin.

Voltaire was the intellectual autocrat of his time. From his throne at the foot of the Alps he pointed the finger of scorn at every hypocrite in Europe. He was the pioneer of his century. He was the assassin of superstition. He left the quiver of ridicule without an arrow. Through the shadows of faith and fable, through the darkness of myth and miracle, through the midnight of Christianity, through the blackness of bigotry, past cathedral and dungeon, past rack and stake, past altar and throne, he carried, with chivalric hands, the sacred torch of reason.

DIDEROT.

DOUBT IS THE FIRST STEP TOWARD TRUTH.

DIDEROT was born in 1713. His parents were in what may be called the humbler walks of life. Like Voltaire he was educated by the Jesuits. He had in him something of the vagabond, and was for several years almost a beggar in Paris. He was endeavoring to live by his pen. In that day and generation, a man without a patron, endeavoring to live by literature, was necessarily almost a beggar. He nearly starved—frequently going for days without food. Afterward, when he had something himself, he was as generous as the air. No man ever was more willing to give, and no man less willing to receive, than Diderot.

He wrote upon all conceivable subjects, that he might have bread. He even wrote sermons, and regretted it all his life. He and D'Alembert were the life and soul of the Encyclopædia. With infinite enthusiasm he helped to gather the knowledge of the world for the use of each and all. He harvested the fields of thought, separated the grain from

the straw and chaff, and endeavored to throw away the seeds and fruit of superstition. His motto was, "*Incredulity is the first step towards philosophy.*"

He had the vices of most Christians—was nearly as immoral as the majority of priests. His vices he shared in common, his virtues were his own. All who knew him united in saying that he had the pity of a woman, the generosity of a prince, the self-denial of an anchorite, the courage of Cæsar, and the enthusiasm of a poet. He attacked with every power of his mind the superstition of his day. He said what he thought. The priests hated him. He was in favor of universal education—the church despised it. He wished to put the knowledge of the whole world within reach of the poorest.

He wished to drive from the gate of the Garden of Eden the cherubim of superstition, so that the child of Adam might return to eat once more the fruit of the tree of knowledge. Every Catholic was his enemy. His poor little desk was ransacked by the police searching for manuscripts in which something might be found that would justify the imprisonment of such a dangerous man. Whoever, in 1750, wished to increase the knowledge of mankind was regarded as the enemy of social order.

The intellectual superstructure of France rests

upon the Encyclopædia. The knowledge given to the people was the impulse, the commencement, of the revolution that left the church without an altar and the king without a throne. Diderot thought for himself, and bravely gave his thoughts to others. For this reason he was regarded as a criminal. He did not expect his reward in another world. He did not do what he did to please some imaginary God. He labored for mankind. He wished to lighten the burdens of those who should live after him. Hear these noble words:

"The more man ascends through the past, and the more he launches into the future, the greater he will be, and all these philosophers and ministers and truth-telling men who have fallen victims to the stupidity of nations, the atrocities of priests, the fury of tyrants, what consolation was left for them in death? This: That prejudice would pass, and that posterity would pour out the vial of ignominy upon their enemies. O Posterity! Holy and sacred stay of the unhappy and the oppressed; thou who art just, thou who art incorruptible, thou who findest the good man, who unmaskest the hypocrite, who breakest down the tyrant, may thy sure faith, thy consoling faith never, never abandon me!" Posterity is for the philosopher what the other world is for the devotee.

Diderot took the ground that, if orthodox religion be true Christ was guilty of suicide. Having the power to defend himself he should have used it.

Of course it would not do for the church to allow a man to die in peace who had added to the intellectual wealth of the world. The moment Diderot was dead, Catholic priests began painting and recounting the horrors of his expiring moments. They described him as overcome with remorse, as insane with fear; and these falsehoods have been repeated by the Protestant world, and will probably be repeated by thousands of ministers after we are dead. The truth is, he had passed his three-score years and ten. He had lived for seventy-one years. He had eaten his supper. He had been conversing with his wife. He was reclining in his easy chair. His mind was at perfect rest. He had entered, without knowing it, the twilight of his last day. Above the horizon was the evening star, telling of sleep. The room grew still and the stillness was lulled by the murmur of the street. There were a few moments of perfect peace. The wife said, "He is asleep." She enjoyed his repose, and breathed softly that he might not be disturbed. The moments wore on, and still he slept. Lovingly, softly, at last she touched him. Yes, he was asleep. He had become a part of the eternal silence.

DAVID HUME.

THE worst religion of the world was the Presbyterianism of Scotland as it existed in the beginning of the eighteenth century. The Kirk had all the faults of the Church of Rome without a redeeming feature. The Kirk hated music, painting, statuary, and architecture. Anything touched with humanity—with the dimples of joy—was detested and accursed. God was to be feared—not loved.

Life was a long battle with the Devil. Every desire was of Satan. Happiness was a snare, and human love was wicked, weak and vain. The Presbyterian priest of Scotland was as cruel, bigoted and heartless as the familiar of the Inquisition.

One case will tell it all;

In the beginning of this, the nineteenth century, a boy seventeen years of age, Thomas Aikenhead, was indicted and tried at Edinburgh for blasphemy. He had denied the inspiration of the Bible. He had on several occasions, when cold, jocularly wished himself in hell that he might get warm. The poor, fright-

ened boy recanted—begged for mercy; but he was found guilty, hanged, thrown in a hole at the foot of the scaffold, and his weeping mother vainly begged that his bruised and bleeding body might be given to her.

This one case, multiplied again and again, gives you the condition of Scotland when, on the 26th of April, 1711, David Hume was born.

David Hume was one of the few Scotchmen of his day who were not owned by the church. He had the manliness to examine historical and religious questions for himself, and the courage to give his conclusions to the world. He was singularly capable of governing himself. He was a philosopher, and lived a calm and cheerful life, unstained by an unjust act, free from all excess, and devoted in a reasonable degree to benefiting his fellow-men. After examining the Bible he became convinced that it was not true. For failing to suppress his real opinion, for failing to tell a deliberate falsehood, he brought upon himself the hatred of the church.

Intellectual honesty is the sin against the Holy Ghost, and whether God will forgive this sin or not his church has not, and never will.

Hume took the ground that a miracle could not be used as evidence until the fact that it had happened

was established. But *how* can a miracle be established? Take any miracle recorded in the Bible, and *how* could it be established now? You may say: Upon the testimony of those who wrote the account. Who were they? No one knows. How could you prove the resurrection of Lazarus? Or of the widow's son? How could you substantiate, to-day, the ascension of Jesus Christ? In what way could you prove that the river Jordan was divided upon being struck by the coat of a prophet? How is it possible now to establish the fact that the fires of a furnace refused to burn three men? Where are the witnesses? Who, upon the whole earth, has the slightest knowledge upon this subject?

He insisted that at the bottom of all good was the useful; that human happiness was an end worth working and living for; that origin and destiny were alike unknown; that the best religion was to live temperately and to deal justly with our fellow-men; that the dogma of inspiration was absurd, and that an honest man had nothing to fear. Of course the Kirk hated him. He laughed at the creed.

To the lot of Hume fell ease, respect, success, and honor. While many disciples of God were the sport and prey of misfortune, he kept steadily advancing.

Envious Christians bided their time. They waited as patiently as possible for the horrors of death to fall upon the heart and brain of David Hume. They knew that all the furies would be there, and that God would get his revenge.

Adam Smith, author of the "Wealth of Nations," speaking of Hume in his last sickness, says that in the presence of death "his cheerfulness was so great, and his conversation and amusements ran so much in the usual strain, that, notwithstanding all his bad symptoms, many people could not believe he was dying. A few days before his death Hume said: 'I am dying as fast as my enemies—if I have any—could wish, and as easily and tranquilly as my best friends could desire.'"

Col. Edmondstoune shortly afterward wrote Hume a letter, of which the following is an extract:

"My heart is full. I could not see you this morning. I thought it was better for us both. You cannot die—you must live in the memory of your friends and acquaintances; and your works will render you immortal. I cannot conceive that it was possible for any one to dislike you, or hate you. He must be more than savage who could be an enemy to a man with the best head and heart and the most amiable manners."

Adam Smith happened to go into his room while he was reading the above letter, which he immediately showed him. Smith said to Hume that he was sensible of how much he was weakening, and that appearances were in many respects bad; yet, that his cheerfulness was so great and the spirit of life still seemed to be so strong in him, that he could not keep from entertaining some hopes.

Hume answered, "When I lie down in the evening I feel myself weaker than when I arose in the morning; and when I rise in the morning, weaker than when I lay down in the evening. I am sensible, besides, that some of my vital parts are affected so that I must soon die."

"Well," said Mr. Smith, "if it must be so, you have at least the satisfaction of leaving all your friends, and the members of your brother's family in particular, in great prosperity."

He replied that he was so sensible of his situation that when he was reading Lucian's Dialogues of the Dead, among all the excuses which are alleged to Charon for not entering readily into his boat, he could not find one that fitted him. He had no house to finish; he had no daughter to provide for; he had no enemies upon whom he wished to revenge himself; "and I could not well," said he, "imagine what

excuse I could make to Charon in order to obtain a little delay. I have done everything of consequence which I ever meant to do, and I could, at no time expect to leave my relations and friends in a better situation than that in which I am now likely to leave them; and I have, therefore, every reason to die contented."

"Upon further consideration," said he, "I thought I might say to him, 'Good Charon, I have been correcting my works for a new edition. Allow me a little time that I may see how the public receives the alterations.' 'But,' Charon would answer, 'when you have seen the effect of this, you will be for making other alterations. There will be no end to such excuses; so, my honest friend, please step into the boat.' 'But,' I might still urge, 'have a little patience, good Charon; I have been endeavoring to open the eyes of the public; if I live a few years longer, I may have the satisfaction of seeing the downfall of some of the prevailing systems of superstition.' And Charon would then lose all temper and decency, and would cry out, 'You loitering rogue, that will not happen these many hundred years. Do you fancy I will grant you a lease for so long a time? Get into the boat this instant.'"

To the Comtesse de Boufflers, the dying man

with the perfect serenity that springs from an honest and loving life, writes :

"I see death approach gradually without any anxiety or regret. * * * I salute you with great affection and regard, for the last time."

On the 25th of August, 1776, the philosopher, the historian, the infidel, the honest man, and a benefactor of his race, in the composure born of a noble life, passed quietly and panglessly away.

Dr. Black wrote the following account of his death ;

"MONDAY, 26 *August*, 1776.

"DEAR SIR : Yesterday, about four o'clock in the afternoon, Mr. Hume expired. The near approach of his death became evident on the evening between Thursday and Friday, when his disease became exhaustive, and soon weakened him so much that he could no longer rise from his bed. He continued to the last perfectly sensible, and free from much pain or feeling of distress. He never dropped the smallest expression of impatience ; but when he had occasion to speak to the people about him, always did it with affection and tenderness. * * * When he became very weak, it cost him an effort to speak, and he died in such happy composure of mind that nothing could exceed it."

Dr. Cullen writes Dr. Hunter on the 17th of

September, 1776, from which the following extracts are made;

"You desire an account of Mr. Hume's last days, and I give it to you with great pleasure. * * * It was truly an example *des grands hommes qui sont morts en plaisantant;* and to me, who have been so often shocked with the horrors of superstition, the reflection on such a death is truly agreeable. For many weeks before his death he was very sensible of his gradual decay; and his answer to inquiries after his health was, several times, that he was going as fast as his enemies could wish, and as easily as his friends could desire. He passed most of the time in his drawing-room, admitting the visits of his friends, and with his usual spirit conversed with them upon literature and politics and whatever else was started. In conversation he seemed to be perfectly at ease; and to the last abounded with that pleasantry and those curious and entertaining anecdotes which ever distinguished him. * * * His senses and judgment did not fail him to the last hour of his life. He constantly discovered a strong sensibility of the attention and care of his friends; and midst great uneasiness and languor never betrayed any peevishness or impatience." (Here follows the conversation with Charon.) "These are

a few particulars which may, perhaps, appear trivial; but to me, no particulars seem trivial which relate to so great a man. It is perhaps from trifles that we can best distinguish the tranquilness and cheerfulness of the philosopher at a time when the most part of mankind are under disquiet, and sometimes even horror. I consider the sacrifice of the cock as a more certain evidence of the tranquillity of Socrates than his discourse on immortality."

The Christians took it for granted that this serene and placid man died filled with remorse for having given his real opinions, and proceeded to describe, with every incident and detail of horror, the terrors of his last moments. Brainless clergymen, incapable of understanding what Hume had written, knowing only in a general way that he had held their creeds in contempt, answered his arguments by maligning his character.

Christians took it for granted that he died in horror and recounted the terrible scenes.

When the facts of his death became generally known to intelligent men, the ministers redoubled their efforts to maintain the old calumnies, and most of them are in this employment even unto this day. Finding it impossible to tell enough falsehoods to hide the truth, a few of the more intelligent among

the priests admitted that Hume not only died without showing any particular fear, but was guilty of unbecoming levity. The first charge was that he died like a coward; the next that he did not care enough, and went through the shadowy doors of the dread unknown with a smile upon his lips. The dying smile of David Hume scandalized the believers in a God of love. They felt shocked to see a man dying without fear who denied the miracles of the Bible; who had spent a life investigating the opinions of men; in endeavoring to prove to the world that the right way is the best way; that happiness is a real and substantial good, and that virtue is not a termagant with sunken cheeks and hollow eyes.

Christians hated to admit that a philosopher had died serenely without the aid of superstition—one who had taught that man could not make God happy by making himself miserable, and that a useful life, after all, was the best possible religion. They imagined that death would fill such a man with remorse and terror. He had never persecuted his fellowmen for the honor of God, and must needs die in despair. They were mistaken.

He died as he had lived. Like a peaceful river with green and shaded banks he passed, without a murmur, into that waveless sea where life at last is rest.

BENEDICT SPINOZA.

ONE of the greatest thinkers was Benedict Spinoza, a Jew, born at Amsterdam, in 1632. He studied medicine and afterward theology. He endeavored to understand what he studied. In theology he necessarily failed. Theology is not intended to be understood,—it is only to be believed. It is an act, not of reason, but of faith. Spinoza put to the rabbis so many questions, and so persistently asked for reasons, that he became the most troublesome of students. When the rabbis found it impossible to answer the questions, they concluded to silence the questioner. He was tried, found guilty, and excommunicated from the synagogue.

By the terrible curse of the Jewish religion, he was made an outcast from every Jewish home. His father could not give him shelter. His mother could not give him bread—could not speak to him, without becoming an outcast herself. All the cruelty of Jehovah, all the infamy of the Old Testament, was in this curse. In the darkness of the synagogue the rabbis lighted their torches, and while pronouncing the curse, extinguished them in blood, imploring God that in like manner the soul of Benedict Spinoza might be extinguished.

Spinoza was but twenty-four years old when he found himself without kindred, without friends, surrounded only by enemies. He uttered no complaint.

He earned his bread with willing hands, and cheerfully divided his crust with those still poorer than himself.

He tried to solve the problem of existence. To him, the universe was One. The Infinite embraced the All. The All was God. According to his belief, the universe did not commence to be. It is; from eternity it was; to eternity it will be.

He was right. The universe is all there is, or was, or will be. It is both subject and object, contemplator and contemplated, creator and created, destroyer and destroyed, preserver and preserved, and hath within itself all causes, modes, motions and effects.

In this there is hope. This is a foundation and a star. The Infinite is the All. Without the All, the Infinite cannot be. I am something. Without me, the Infinite cannot exist.

Spinoza was a naturalist—that is to say, a pantheist. He took the ground that the supernatural is, and forever will be, an infinite impossibility. His propositions are luminous as stars, and each of his demonstrations is a Gibraltar, behind which logic sits and smiles at all the sophistries of superstition.

Spinoza has been hated because he has not been answered. He was a real republican. He regarded the people as the true and only source of political power. He put the state above the church, the people above the priest. He believed in the absolute liberty of worship, thought and speech. In every relation of life he was just, true, gentle,

patient, modest and loving. He respected the rights of others, and endeavored to enjoy his own, and yet he brought upon himself the hatred of the Jewish and the Christian world. In his day, logic was blasphemy, and to think was the unpardonable sin. The priest hated the philosopher, revelation reviled reason, and faith was the sworn foe of every fact.

Spinoza was a philosopher, a philanthropist. He lived in a world of his own. He avoided men. His life was an intellectual solitude. He was a mental hermit. Only in his own brain he found the liberty he loved. And yet the rabbis and the priests, the ignorant zealot and the cruel bigot, feeling that this quiet, thoughtful, modest man was in some way forging weapons to be used against the church, hated him with all their hearts.

He did not retaliate. He found excuses for their acts. Their ignorance, their malice, their misguided and revengeful zeal excited only pity in his breast. He injured no man. He did not live on alms. He was poor—and yet, with the wealth of his brain, he enriched the world. On Sunday, February 21, 1677, Spinoza, one of the greatest and subtlest of metaphysicians—one of the noblest and purest of human beings,—at the age of forty-four, passed tranquilly away; and notwithstanding the curse of the synagogue under which he had lived and most lovingly labored, death left upon his lips the smile of perfect peace.

OUR INFIDELS.

IN our country there were three infidels—Paine, Franklin and Jefferson. The colonies were filled with superstition, the Puritans with the spirit of persecution. Laws savage, ignorant and malignant had been passed in every colony, for the purpose of destroying intellectual liberty. Mental freedom was absolutely unknown. The Toleration Acts of Maryland tolerated only Christians—not infidels, not thinkers, not investigators. The charity of Roger Williams was not extended to those who denied the Bible, or suspected the divinity of Christ. It was not based upon the rights of man, but upon the rights of believers, who differed in non-essential points.

The moment the colonies began to deny the rights of the king they suspected the power of the priest. In digging down to find an excuse for fighting George the Third, they unwittingly undermined the church. They went through the Revolution

together. They found that all denominations fought equally well. They also found that persons without religion had patriotism and courage, and were willing to die that a new nation might be born. As a matter of fact the pulpit was not in hearty sympathy with our fathers. Many priests were imprisoned because they would not pray for the Continental Congress. After victory had enriched our standard, and it became necessary to make a constitution—to establish a government—the infidels—the men like Paine, like Jefferson, and like Franklin, saw that the church must be left out; that a government deriving its just powers from the consent of the governed could make no contract with a church pretending to derive its powers from an infinite God.

By the efforts of these infidels, the name of God was left out of the Constitution of the United States. They knew that if an infinite being was put in, no room would be left for the people. They knew that if any church was made the mistress of the state, that mistress, like all others, would corrupt, weaken, and destroy. Washington wished a church established by law in Virginia. He was prevented by Thomas Jefferson. It was only a little while ago that people were compelled to attend church by law in the Eastern States, and taxes were raised for the

support of churches the same as for the construction of highways and bridges. The great principle enunciated in the Constitution has silently repealed most of these laws. In the presence of this great instrument, the constitutions of the States grew small and mean, and in a few years every law that puts a chain upon the mind, except in Delaware, will be repealed, and for these our children may thank the Infidels of 1776.

The church never has pretended that Jefferson or Franklin died in fear. Franklin wrote no books against the fables of the ancient Jews. He thought it useless to cast the pearls of thought before the swine of ignorance and fear. Jefferson was a statesman. He was the father of a great party. He gave his views in letters and to trusted friends. He was a Virginian, author of the Declaration of Independence, founder of a university, father of a political party, President of the United States, a statesman and philosopher. He was too powerful for the divided churches of his day. Paine was a foreigner, a citizen of the world. He had attacked Washington and the Bible. He had done these things openly, and what he had said could not be answered. His arguments were so good that his character was bad.

THOMAS PAINE.

THOMAS PAINE was born in Thetford, England. He came from the common people. At the age of thirty-seven he left England for America. He was the first to perceive the destiny of the New World. He wrote the pamphlet "Common Sense," and in a few months the Continental Congress declared the colonies free and independent States—a new nation was born. Paine having aroused the spirit of independence, gave every energy of his soul to keep the spirit alive. He was with the army. He shared its defeats and its glory. When the situation became desperate, he gave them "The Crisis." It was a pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night, leading the way to freedom, honor, and to victory.

The writings of Paine are gemmed with compact statements that carry conviction to the dullest. Day and night he labored for America, until there was a

government of the people and for the people. At the close of the Revolution, no one stood higher than Thomas Paine. Had he been willing to live a hypocrite, he would have been respectable, he at least could have died surrounded by other hypocrites, and at his death there would have been an imposing funeral, with miles of carriages, filled with hypocrites, and above his hypocritical dust there would have been a hypocritical monument covered with lies.

Having done so much for man in America, he went to France. The seeds sown by the great infidels were bearing fruit in Europe. The eighteenth century was crowning its gray hairs with the wreath of progress. Upon his arrival in France he was elected a member of the French Convention—in fact, he was selected about the same time by the people of no less than four Departments. He was one of the committee to draft a constitution for France. In the Assembly, where nearly all were demanding the execution of the king, he had the courage to vote against death. To vote against the death of the king was to vote against his own life. This was the sublimity of devotion to principle. For this he was arrested, imprisoned, and doomed to death. While under sentence of death, while in the gloomy cell of

his prison, Thomas Paine wrote to Washington, asking him to say one word to Robespierre in favor of the author of "Common Sense." Washington did not reply. He wrote again. Washington, the President, paid no attention to Thomas Paine, the prisoner. The letter was thrown into the waste-basket of forgetfulness, and Thomas Paine remained condemned to death. Afterward he gave his opinion of Washington at length, and I must say, that I have never found it in my heart to greatly blame him.

Thomas Paine, having done so much for political liberty, turned his attention to the superstitions of his age. He published "The Age of Reason;" and from that day to this, his character has been maligned by almost every priest in Christendom. He has been held up as the terrible example. Every man who has expressed an honest thought, has been warningly referred to Thomas Paine. All his services were forgotten. No kind word fell from any pulpit. His devotion to principle, his zeal for human rights, were no longer remembered. Paine simply took the ground that it is a contradiction to call a thing a revelation that comes to us second-hand. There can be no revelation beyond the first communication. All after that is hearsay. He also

showed that the prophecies of the Old Testament had no relation whatever to Jesus Christ, and contended that Jesus Christ was simply a man. In other words, Paine was an enlightened Unitarian. Paine thought the Old Testament too barbarous to have been the work of an infinitely benevolent God. He attacked the doctrine that salvation depends upon belief. He insisted that every man has the right to think.

After the publication of these views every falsehood that malignity could coin and malice pass was given to the world. On his return to America, after the election to the presidency of another infidel, Thomas Jefferson, it was not safe for him to appear in the public streets. He was in danger of being mobbed. Under the very flag he had helped to put in heaven his rights were not respected. Under the Constitution that he had suggested, his life was insecure. He had helped to give liberty to more than three millions of his fellow-citizens, and they were willing to deny it unto him. He was deserted, ostracized, shunned, maligned, and cursed. He enjoyed the seclusion of a leper; but he maintained through it all his integrity. He stood by the convictions of his mind. Never for one moment did he hesitate or waver.

He died almost alone. The moment he died Christians commenced manufacturing horrors for his death-bed. They had his chamber filled with devils rattling chains, and these ancient lies are annually certified to by the respectable Christians of the present day. The truth is, he died as he had lived. Some ministers were impolite enough to visit him against his will. Several of them he ordered from his room. A couple of Catholic priests, in all the meekness of hypocrisy, called that they might enjoy the agonies of a dying friend of man. Thomas Paine, rising in his bed, the few embers of expiring life blown into flame by the breath of indignation, had the goodness to curse them both. His physician, who seems to have been a meddling fool, just as the cold hand of death was touching the patriot's heart, whispered in the dull ear of the dying man: "Do you believe, or do you wish to believe, that Jesus Christ is the son of God?" And the reply was: "I have no wish to believe on that subject."

These were the last remembered words of Thomas Paine. He died as serenely as ever Christian passed away. He died in the full possession of his mind, and on the very brink and edge of death proclaimed the doctrines of his life.

Every Christian, every philanthropist, every be-

liever in human liberty, should feel under obligation to Thomas Paine for the splendid service rendered by him in the darkest days of the American Revolution. In the midnight of Valley Forge, "The Crisis" was the first star that glittered in the wide horizon of despair. Every good man should remember with gratitude the brave words spoken by Thomas Paine in the French Convention against the death of Louis. He said: "We will kill the king, but not the man. We will destroy monarchy, not the monarch."

Thomas Paine was a champion, in both hemispheres, of human liberty; one of the founders and fathers of this Republic; one of the foremost men of his age. He never wrote a word in favor of injustice. He was a despiser of slavery. He abhorred tyranny in every form. He was, in the widest and best sense, a friend of all his race. His head was as clear as his heart was good, and he had the courage to speak his honest thought.

He was the first man to write these words: "THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA." He proposed the present Federal Constitution. He furnished every thought that now glitters in the Declaration of Independence.

He believed in one God and no more. He was a

believer even in special providence, and he hoped for immortality.

How can the world abhor the man who said :

"I believe in the equality of man, and that religious duties consist in doing justice, in loving mercy, and endeavoring to make our fellow-creatures happy."—

"It is necessary to the happiness of man that he be mentally faithful to himself."—

"The word of God is the creation which we behold."—

"Belief in a cruel God makes a cruel man."—

"My opinion is, that those whose lives have been spent in doing good and endeavoring to make their fellow-mortals happy, will be happy hereafter."—

"One good schoolmaster is of more use than a hundred priests."—

"I believe in one God, and no more, and I hope for happiness beyond this life."—

"Man has no property in man"—and

"The key of heaven is not in the keeping of any sect!"

Had it not been for Thomas Paine I could not deliver this lecture here to-night.

It is still fashionable to calumniate this man—and yet Channing, Theodore Parker, Longfellow, Emer-

son, and in fact all the liberal Unitarians and Universalists of the world have adopted the opinions of Thomas Paine.

Let us compare these Infidels with the Christians of their time :

Compare Julian with Constantine,—the murderer of his wife,—the murderer of his son,—and who established Christianity with the same sword he had wet with their blood. Compare him with all the Christian emperors—with all the robbers and murderers and thieves—the parricides and fratricides and matricides that ever wore the imperial purple on the banks of the Tiber or the shores of the Bosphorus.

Let us compare Bruno with the Christians who burned him ; and we will compare Spinoza, Voltaire, Diderot, Hume, Jefferson, Paine—with the men who it is claimed have been the visible representatives of God.

Let it be remembered that the popes have committed every crime of which human nature is capable, and that not one of them was the friend of intellectual liberty—that not one of them ever shed one ray of light.

Let us compare these Infidels with the founders of sectarian churches; you will see how narrow, how

bigoted, how cruel were their founders, and how broad, how generous, how noble, were these infidels.

Let us be honest. The great effort of the human mind is to ascertain the order of facts by which we are surrounded—the history of things.

Who has accomplished the most in this direction—the church, or the unbelievers? Upon one side write all that the church has discovered—every phenomenon that has been explained by a creed, every new fact in Nature that has been discovered by a church, and on the other side write the discoveries of HUMBOLDT, and the observations and demonstrations of DARWIN!

Who has made Germany famous—her priests, or her scientists?

GOETHE.

KANT: That immortal man who said: "Whoever thinks that he can please God in any way except by discharging his obligations to his fellows, is superstitious."

And that greatest and bravest of thinkers, ERNST HAECKEL.

HUMBOLDT.

Italy:—MAZZINI. GARIBALDI.

In France who are and were the friends of

freedom—the Catholic priests, or RENAN? the bishops, or GAMBETTA?—Dupanloup, or VICTOR HUGO?

MICHELET—TAINE—AUGUSTE COMTE.

England:—Let us compare her priests with JOHN STUART MILL,—HARRIET MARTINEAU, that "free rover on the breezy common of the universe."—GEORGE ELIOT—with HUXLEY and TYNDALL, with HOLYOAKE and HARRISON—and above and over all—with CHARLES DARWIN.

CONCLUSION.

LET us be honest. Did all the priests of Rome increase the mental wealth of man as much as Bruno? Did all the priests of France do as great a work for the civilization of the world as Diderot and Voltaire? Did all the ministers of Scotland add as much to the sum of human knowledge as David Hume? Have all the clergymen, monks, friars, ministers, priests, bishops, cardinals and popes, from the day of Pentecost to the last election, done as much for human liberty as Thomas Paine?—as much for science as Charles Darwin?

What would the world be if infidels had never been?

The infidels have been the brave and thoughtful men; the flower of all the world; the pioneers and heralds of the blessed day of liberty and love; the generous spirits of the unworthy past; the seers and prophets of our race; the great chivalric souls, proud victors on the battlefields of thought, the creditors of all the years to be.

Why should it be taken for granted that the men who devoted their lives to the liberation of their fellow-men should have been hissed at in the hour of death by the snakes of conscience, while men who defended slavery, practiced polygamy, justified the stealing of babes from the breasts of mothers, and lashed the naked back of unpaid labor are supposed to have passed smilingly from earth to the embraces of the angels? Why should we think that the brave thinkers, the investigators, the honest men, must have left the crumbling shore of time in dread and fear, while the instigators of the massacre of St. Bartholomew; the inventors and users of thumb-screws, of iron boots and racks; the burners and tearers of human flesh; the stealers, the whippers and the enslavers of men; the buyers and beaters of maidens, mothers, and babes; the founders of the Inquisition; the makers of chains; the builders of dungeons; the calumniators of the living; the slanderers of the dead, and even the murderers of Jesus Christ, all died in the odor of sanctity, with white, forgiven hands folded upon the breasts of peace, while the destroyers of prejudice, the apostles of humanity, the soldiers of liberty, the breakers of fetters, the creators of light, died surrounded by the fierce fiends of God?

WHICH WAY?

WHICH WAY?

I.

THERE are two ways,—the natural and the supernatural.

One way is to live for the world we are in, to develop the brain by study and investigation, to take, by invention, advantage of the forces of nature, to the end that we may have good houses, raiment and food, to the end that the hunger of the mind may be fed through art and science.

The other way is to live for another world that we expect, to sacrifice this life that we have for another that we know not of. The other way is by prayer and ceremony to obtain the assistance, the protection of some phantom above the clouds.

One way is to think—to investigate, to observe, and follow the light of reason. The other way is to believe, to accept, to follow, to deny the authority of

your own senses, your own reason, and bow down to those who are impudent enough to declare that they know.

One way is to live for the benefit of your fellow-men—for your wife and children—to make those you love happy and to shield them from the sorrows of life.

The other way is to live for ghosts, goblins, phantoms and gods with the hope that they will reward you in another world.

One way is to enthrone reason and rely on facts, the other to crown credulity and live on faith.

One way is to walk by the light within—by the flame that illumines the brain, verifying all by the senses—by touch and sight and sound.

The other way is to extinguish the sacred light and follow blindly the steps of another.

One way is to be an honest man, giving to others your thought, standing erect, intrepid, careless of phantoms and hells.

The other way is to cringe and crawl, to betray your nobler self, and to deprive others of the liberty that you have not the courage to enjoy.

Do not imagine that I hate the ones who have taken the wrong side and traveled the wrong road.

Our fathers did the best they could. They believed in the Supernatural, and they thought that sacrifices and prayer, fasting and weeping, would induce the Supernatural to give them sunshine, rain and harvest —long life in this world and eternal joy in another. To them, God was an absolute monarch, quick to take offence, sudden in anger, terrible in punishment, jealous, hateful to his enemies, generous to his favorites. They believed also in the existence of an evil God, almost the equal of the other God in strength, and a little superior in cunning. Between these two Gods was the soul of man like a mouse between two paws.

Both of these Gods inspired fear. Our fathers did not quite love God, nor quite hate the Devil, but they were afraid of both. They really wished to enjoy themselves with God in the next world and with the Devil in this. They believed that the course of Nature was affected by their conduct; that floods and storms, diseases, earthquakes and tempests were sent as punishments, and that all good phenomena were rewards.

Everything was under the direction and control of supernatural powers. The air, the darkness, were filled with angels and devils; witches and

wizards planned and plotted against the pious—against the true believers. Eclipses were produced by the sins of the people, and the unusual was regarded as the miraculous. In the good old times Christendom was an insane asylum, and insane priests and prelates were the keepers. There was no science. The people did not investigate—did not think. They trembled and believed. Ignorance and superstition ruled the Christian world.

At last a few began to observe, to make records, and to think.

It was found that eclipses came at certain intervals, and that their coming could be foretold. This demonstrated that the actions of men had nothing to do with eclipses. A few began to suspect that earthquakes and storms had natural causes, and happened without the slightest reference to mankind.

Some began to doubt the existence of evil spirits, or the interference of good ones in the affairs of the world. Finding out something about astronomy, the great number of the stars, the certain and continuous motions of the planets, and the fact that many of them were vastly larger than the earth; ascertaining something about the earth, the slow development of forms, the growth and distribution of plants, the

formation of islands and continents, the parts played by fire, water and air through countless centuries; the kinship of all life; fixing the earth's place in the constellation of the sun; by experiment and research discovering a few secrets of chemistry; by the invention of printing, and the preservation and dissemination of facts, theories and thoughts, they were enabled to break a few chains of superstition, to free themselves a little from the dominion of the supernatural, and to set their faces toward the light. Slowly the number of investigators and thinkers increased, slowly the real facts were gathered, the sciences began to appear, the old beliefs grew a little absurd, the supernatural retreated and ceased to interfere in the ordinary affairs of men.

Schools were founded, children were taught, books were printed and the thinkers increased. Day by day confidence lessened in the supernatural, and day by day men were more and more impressed with the idea that man must be his own protector, his own providence. From the mists and darkness of savagery and superstition emerged the dawn of the Natural. A sense of freedom took possession of the mind, and the soul began to dream of its power. On every side were invention and discovery, and bolder

thought. The church began to regard the friends of science as its foes. Theologians resorted to chain and fagot—to mutilation and torture.

The thinkers were denounced as heretics and Atheists—as the minions of Satan and the defamers of Christ. All the ignorance, prejudice and malice of superstition were aroused and all united for the destruction of investigation and thought. For centuries this conflict was waged. Every outrage was perpetrated, every crime committed by the believers in the supernatural. But, in spite of all, the disciples of the Natural increased, and the power of the church waned. Now the intelligence of the world is on the side of the Natural. Still the conflict goes on—the supernatural constantly losing, and the Natural constantly gaining. In a few years the victory of science over superstition will be complete and universal.

So, there have been for many centuries two philosophies of life; one in favor of the destruction of the passions—the lessening of wants,—and absolute reliance on some higher power; the other, in favor of the reasonable gratification of the passions, the increase of wants, and their supply by industry, ingenuity and invention, and the reliance of man on

his own efforts. Diogenes, Epictetus, Socrates to some extent, Buddha and Christ, all taught the first philosophy. All despised riches and luxury, all were the enemies of art and music, the despisers of good clothes and good food and good homes. They were the philosophers of poverty and rags, of huts and hovels, of ignorance and faith. They preached the glories of another world and the miseries of this. They derided the prosperous, the industrious, those who enjoyed life, and reserved heaven for beggars.

This philosophy is losing authority, and now most people are anxious to be happy here in this life. Most people want food and roof and raiment—books and pictures, luxury and leisure. They believe in developing the brain—in making servants and slaves of the forces of Nature.

Now the intelligent men of the world have cast aside the teachings, the philosophy of the ascetics. They no longer believe in the virtue of fasting and self-torture. They believe that happiness is the only good, and that the time to be happy is now—here, in this world. They no longer believe in the rewards and punishments of the supernatural. They believe in consequences, and that the consequences

of bad actions are evil, and the consequences of good actions are good.

They believe that man by investigation, by reason, should find out the conditions of happiness, and then live and act in accordance with such conditions. They do not believe that earthquakes, or tempests, or volcanoes, or eclipses are caused by the conduct of men. They no longer believe in the supernatural. They do not regard themselves as the serfs, servants, or favorites of any celestial king. They feel that many evils can be avoided by knowledge, and for that reason they believe in the development of the brain. The schoolhouse is their church and the university their cathedral.

So, there have been for some centuries two theories of government, — one theological, the other secular.

The king received his power directly from God. It was the business of the people to obey. The priests received their creeds from God and it was the duty of the people to believe.

The theological government is growing somewhat unpopular. In England, Parliament has taken the place of God, and in the United States, government derives its powers from the consent of the governed.

Probably Emperor William is the only man in Germany who really believes that God placed him on the throne and will keep him there whether the German people are satisfied or not. Italy has retired the Catholic God from politics, France belongs to and is governed by the French, and even in Russia there are millions who hold the Czar and all his divine pretensions in contempt.

The theological governments are passing away and the secular are slowly taking their places. Man is growing greater and the Gods are becoming vague and indistinct. These "divine" governments rest on the fear and ignorance of the many, the cunning, the impudence and the mendacity of the few. A secular government is born of the intelligence, the honesty and the courage, not only of the few, but of the many.

We have found that man can govern himself without the assistance of priest or pope, of ghost or God. We have found that religion is not self-evident, and that to believe without evidence is not a praiseworthy action. We know that the self-evident is the square and compass of the brain, the polar star in the firmament of mind. And we know that no one denies the self-evident. We also know that there is no

particular goodness in believing when the evidence is sufficient, and certainly there is none in saying that you believe when the evidence is insufficient.

The believers have not all been good. Some of the worst people in the whole world have been believers. The gentlemen who made Socrates drink hemlock were believers. The Jews who crucified Christ were believers in and worshipers of God. The devil believes in the Trinity, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, and yet it does not seem to have affected his moral character. According to the Bible, he trembles, but he does not reform. At last we have concluded that we have a right to examine the religion of our fathers.

II.

ALL Christians know that all the gods, except Jehovah, were created by man ; that they were, and are, false, foolish and monstrous ; that all the heathen temples were built and all their altars erected in vain ; that the sacrifices were wasted, that the priests were hypocrites, that their prayers were unanswered and that the poor people were deceived, robbed and enslaved. But after all, is our God superior to the gods of the heathen ?

We can ask this question now because we are prosperous, and prosperity gives courage. If we should have a few earthquakes or a pestilence we might fall on our knees, shut our eyes and ask the forgiveness of God for ever having had a thought. We know that famine is the friend of faith and that calamity is the sunshine of superstition. But as we have no pestilence or famine, and as the crust of the earth is reasonably quiet, we can afford to examine into the real character of our God.

It must be admitted that the use of power is an excellent test of character.

Would a good God appeal to prejudice, the armor, fortress, sword and shield of ignorance? to credulity, the ring in the priest-led nose of stupidity? to fear, the capital stock of imposture, the lever of hypocrisy? Would a good God frighten or enlighten his children? Would a good God appeal to reason or ignorance, to justice or selfishness, to liberty or the lash?

To our first parents in the Garden of Eden, our God said nothing about the sacredness of love, nothing about children, nothing about education, about justice or liberty.

After they had violated his command he became ferocious as a wild beast. He cursed the earth and to Eve he said :—" I will greatly multiply thy sorrow. In sorrow shalt thou bring forth children. Thy husband shall rule over thee."

Our God made love the slave of pain, made wives serfs, and brutalized the firesides of the world.

Our God drowned the whole world, with the exception of eight people; made the earth one vast and shoreless sea covered with corpses.

Why did he cover the world with men, women and children knowing that he would destroy them?

Why did he not try to reform them? Why would he create people, knowing that they could not be reformed?

Is it possible that our God was intelligent and good?

After the flood our God selected the Jews and abandoned the rest of his children. He paid no attention to the Hindoos, neglected the Egyptians, ignored the Persians, forgot the Assyrians and failed to remember the Greeks. And yet he was the father of them all. For many centuries he was only a tribal God, protecting the few and despising the many. Our God was ignorant, knew nothing of astronomy or geology. He did not even know the shape of the earth, and thought the stars were only specks.

He knew nothing of disease. He thought that the blood of a bird that had been killed over running water was good medicine. He was revengeful and cruel, and assisted some of his children to butcher and destroy others. He commanded them to murder men, wives and children, and to keep alive the maidens and distribute them among his soldiers.

Our God established slavery — commanded men to buy their fellow-men, to make merchandise of

wives and babes. Our God sanctioned polygamy and made wives the property of their husbands. Our God murdered the people for the crimes of kings.

No man of intelligence, no one whose brain has not been poisoned by superstition, paralyzed by fear, can read the Old Testament without being forced to the conclusion that our God was a wild beast.

If we must have a god, let him be merciful. Let us remember that "the quality of mercy is not strained." Let us remember that when the sword of Justice becomes a staff to support the weak, it bursts into blossom, and that the perfume of that flower is the only incense, the only offering, the only sacrifice that mercy will accept.

III.

SO, there have been two theories about the cause and cure of disease. One is the theological, the other the scientific.

According to the theological idea, diseases were produced by evil spirits, by devils who entered into the bodies of people.

These devils could be cast out by prophets, inspired men and priests.

While Christ was upon earth his principal business was to cast out evil spirits.

For many centuries the priests followed his example, and during the Middle Ages millions of devils were driven from the bodies of men. Diseases were cured with little images of consecrated pewter, with pieces of paper, with crosses worn about the neck—by having plaster of Paris Virgins and clay Christs at the head of the bed, by touching the bones of dead saints, or pieces of the true cross, or one of

the nails that was driven through the flesh of Christ, or a garment that had been worn by the Virgin Mary, or by sprinkling the breast with holy water, or saying prayers, or counting beads, or making the stations of the cross, or by going without meat, or wearing haircloth, or in some way torturing the body. All diseases were supposed to be of supernatural origin and all cures were of the same nature. Pestilences were stopped by processions, led by priests carrying the Host.

Nothing was known of natural causes and effects. Everything was miraculous and mysterious. The priests were cunning and the people credulous,

Slowly another theory as to the cause and cure of disease took possession of the mind. A few discarded the idea of devils, and took the ground that diseases were naturally produced, and that many of them could be cured by natural means.

At first the physician was exceedingly ignorant, but he knew more than the priest. Slowly but surely he pushed the priest from the bedside. Some people finally became intelligent enough to trust their bodies to the doctors, and remained ignorant enough to leave the care of their souls with the priests. Among civilized people the theological theory has been cast

aside, and the miraculous, the supernatural, no longer has a place in medicine. In Catholic countries the peasants are still cured by images, prayers, holy water and the bones of saints, but when the priests are sick they send for a physician, and now even the Pope, God's agent, gives his sacred body to the care of a doctor.

The scientific has triumphed to a great extent over the theological.

No intelligent person now believes that devils inhabit the bodies of men. No intelligent person now believes that devils are trying to control the actions of men. No intelligent person now believes that devils exist.

And yet, at the present time, in the city of New York, Catholic priests are exhibiting a piece of one of the bones of Saint Anne, the supposed mother of the Virgin Mary. Some of these priests may be credulous imbeciles and some may be pious rogues. If they have any real intelligence they must know that there is no possible way of proving that the piece of bone ever belonged to Saint Anne. And if they have any real intelligence they must know that even the bones of Saint Anne were substantially like the bones of other people, made of substantially

the same material, and that the medical and miraculous qualities of all human bones must be substantially the same. And yet these priests are obtaining from their credulous dupes thousands and thousands of dollars for the privilege of seeing this bone and kissing the box that contains the "sacred relic."

Archbishop Corrigan knows that no one knows who the mother of the Virgin Mary was, that no one knows about any of the bones of this unknown mother, knows that the whole thing is a theological fraud, knows that his priests, or priests under his jurisdiction, are obtaining money under false pretences. Cardinal Gibbons knows the same, but neither of these pious gentlemen has one word to say against this shameless crime. They are willing that priests for the benefit of the church should make merchandise of the hopes and fears of ignorant believers; willing that fraud that produces revenue should live and thrive.

This is the honesty of the theologian. If these gentlemen should be taken sick they would not touch the relic. They would send for a physician.

Let me tell you a Japanese story that is exactly in point:

An old monk was in charge of a monastery that had been built above the bones of a saint. These bones had the power to cure diseases and they were so placed that by thrusting the arm through an orifice they could be touched by the hand of the pilgrim. Many people, afflicted in many ways, came and touched these bones. Many thought they had been benefited or cured, and many in gratitude left large sums of money with the monk. One day the old monk addressed his assistant as follows: "My dear son, business has fallen off, and I can easily attend to all who come. You will have to find another place. I will give you the white donkey, a little money, and my blessing."

So the young man mounted upon the beast and went his way. In a few days his money was gone and the white donkey died. An idea took possession of the young man's mind. By the side of the road he buried the donkey, and then to every passer-by held out his hands and said in solemn tones: "I pray thee give me a little money to build a temple above the bones of the sinless one."

Such was his success that he built the temple, and then thousands came to touch the bones of the sinless one. The young man became rich, gave em-

ployment to many assistants and lived in the greatest luxury.

One day he made up his mind to visit his old master. Taking with him a large retinue of servants he started for the old home. When he reached the place the old monk was seated by the doorway. With great astonishment he looked at the young man and his retinue. The young man dismounted and made himself known, and the old monk cried: "Where hast thou been? Tell me, I pray thee, the story of thy success."

"Ah," the young man replied, "old age is stupid, but youth has thoughts. Wait until we are alone and I will tell you all."

So that night the young man told his story, told about the death and burial of the donkey, the begging of money to build a temple over the bones of the sinless one, and of the sums of money he had received for the cures the bones had wrought.

When he finished a satisfied smile crept over his pious face as he added: "Old age is stupid, but youth has thoughts."

"Be not so fast," said the old monk, as he placed his trembling hand on the head of his visitor,

"Young man, this monastery in which your youth was passed, in which you have seen so many miracles performed, so many diseases cured, was built above the sacred bones of the mother of your little jackass."

IV.

THERE are two ways of accounting for the sacred books and religions of the world.

One is to say that the sacred books were written by inspired men, and that our religion was revealed to us by God.

The other is to say that all books have been written by men, without any aid from supernatural powers, and that all religions have been naturally produced.

We find that other races and peoples have sacred books and prophets, priests and Christs; we find too that their sacred books were written by men who had the prejudices and peculiarities of the race to which they belonged, and that they contain the mistakes and absurdities peculiar to the people who produced them.

Christians are perfectly satisfied that all the so-called sacred books, with the exception of the Old and New Testaments, were written by men, and

that the claim of inspiration is perfectly absurd. So they believe that all religions, except Judaism and Christianity, were invented by men. The believers in other religions take the ground that their religion was revealed by God, and that all others, including Judaism and Christianity, were made by men. All are right and all are wrong. When they say that "other" religions were produced by men, they are right; when they say that their religion was revealed by God, they are wrong.

Now we know that all tribes and nations have had some kind of religion; that they have believed in the existence of good and evil beings, spirits or powers, that could be softened by gifts or prayer. Now we know that at the foundation of every religion, of all worship, is the pale and bloodless face of fear. Now we know that all religions and all sacred books have been naturally produced — all born of ignorance, fear and cunning.

Now we know that the gifts, sacrifices and prayers were all in vain; that no god received and that no god heard or answered.

A few years ago prayers decided the issue of battle, and priests, through their influence with God, could give the victory. Now no intelligent man

expects any answer to prayer. He knows that nature pursues her course without reference to the wishes of men, that the clouds float, the winds blow, the rain falls and the sun shines without regard to the human race. Yet millions are still praying, still hoping that they can gain the protection of some god, that some being will guard them from accident and disease. Year after year the ministers make the same petitions, pray for the same things, and keep on in spite of the fact that nothing is accomplished.

Whenever good men do some noble thing the clergy give their God the credit, and when evil things are done they hold the men who did the evil responsible, and forget to blame their God.

Praying has become a business, a profession, a trade. A minister is never happier than when praying in public. Most of them are exceedingly familiar with their God. Knowing that he knows everything, they tell him the needs of the nation and the desires of the people, they advise him what to do and when to do it. They appeal to his pride, asking him to do certain things for his own glory. They often pray for the impossible. In the House of Representatives in Washington I once heard a chaplain

pray for what he must have known was impossible. Without a change of countenance, without a smile, with a face solemn as a sepulchre, he said: "I pray thee, O God, to give Congress wisdom." It may be that ministers really think that their prayers do good and it may be that frogs imagine that their croaking brings spring.

The men of thought now know that all religions and all sacred books have been made by men; that no revelation has come from any being superior to nature; that all the prophecies were either false or made after the event; that no miracle ever was or ever will be performed; that no God wants the worship or the assistance of man; that no prayer has ever coaxed one drop of rain from the sky, one ray of light from the sun; that no prayer has stayed the flood, or the tides of the sea, or folded the wings of the storm; that no prayer has given water to the cracked and bleeding lips of thirst, or food to the famishing; that no prayer has stopped the pestilence, stilled the earthquake or quieted the volcano; that no prayer has shielded the innocent, succored the oppressed, unlocked the dungeon's door, broke the chains of slaves, rescued the good and noble from the scaffold, or extinguished the fagot's flame.

The intelligent man now knows that we live in a natural world, that gods and devils and the sons of God are all phantoms, that our religion and our Deity are much like the religion and deities of other nations, and that the stone god of a savage answers prayer and protects his worshipers precisely the same, and to just the same extent, as the Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

V.

THERE are two theories about morals. One theory is that the moral man obeys the commands of a supposed God, without stopping to think whether the commands are right or wrong. He believes that the will of the God is the source and fountain of right. He thinks a thing is wrong because the God prohibits it, not that the God prohibits it because it is wrong. This theory calls not for thought, but for obedience. It does not appeal to reason, but to the fear of punishment, the hope of reward. God is a king whose will is law, and men are serfs and slaves.

Many contend that without a belief in the existence of God morality is impossible and that virtue would perish from the earth.

This absurd theory, with its "Thus saith the Lord" has been claimed to be independent of and superior to reason.

The other theory is that right and wrong exist in the nature of things; that certain actions preserve or increase the happiness of man, and that other actions cause sorrow and misery; that all those actions that cause happiness are moral, and that all others are evil, or indifferent. Right and wrong are not revelations from some supposed god, but have been discovered through the experience and intelligence of man. There is nothing miraculous or supernatural about morality. Neither has morality anything to do with another world, or with an infinite being. It applies to conduct here, and the effect of that conduct on ourselves and others determines its nature.

In this world people are obliged to supply their wants by labor. Industry is a necessity, and those who work are the natural enemies of those who steal.

It required no revelation from God to make larceny unpopular. Human beings naturally object to being injured, maimed, or killed, and so everywhere, and at all times, they have tried to protect themselves.

Men did not require a revelation from God to put in their minds the thought of self-preservation. To

defend yourself when attacked is as natural as to eat when you are hungry.

To determine the quality of an action by showing that it is in accordance with, or contrary to the command of some supposed God, is superstition pure and simple. To test all actions by their consequences is scientific and in accord with reason.

According to the supernatural theory, natural consequences are not taken into consideration. Actions are wrong because they have been prohibited and right because they have been commanded. According to the Catholic Church, eating meat on Friday is a sin that deserves eternal punishment. And yet, in the nature of things, the consequences of eating meat on that day must be exactly the same as eating meat on any other. So, all the churches teach that unbelief is a crime, not in the nature of things, but by reason of the will of God.

Of course this is absurd and idiotic. If there be an infinite God he cannot make that wrong which in the nature of things is right. Neither can he make an action good the natural consequences of which are evil. Even an infinite God cannot change a fact. In spite of him the relation between the diameter

and circumference of a circle would remain the same.

All the relations of things to things, of forces to forces, of acts to acts, of causes to effects in the domain of what is called matter, and in the realm of what is called mind, are just as certain, just as unchangeable as the relation between the diameter and circumference of a circle.

An infinite God could not make ingratitude a virtue any easier than he could make a square triangle.

So, the foundations of the moral and the immoral are in the nature of things — in the necessary relation between conduct and well-being, and an infinite God cannot change these foundations, and cannot increase or diminish the natural consequences of actions.

In this world there is neither chance nor caprice, neither magic nor miracle. Behind every event, every thought and dream, is the efficient, the natural and necessary cause.

The effort to make the will of a supposed God the foundation of morality, has filled the world with misery and crime, extinguished in millions of minds the light of reason, and in countless ways hindered and delayed the progress of our race.

Intelligent men now know, that if there be an infinite God, man cannot in any way increase or decrease the happiness of such a being. They know that man can only commit crimes against sentient beings who, to some extent at least, are within his power, and that a crime by a finite being against an infinite being is an infinite impossibility.

VI.

FOR many thousands of years man has believed in and sought for the impossible. In chemistry he has searched for a universal solvent, for some way by which to change the baser metals into gold. Even Lord Bacon was a believer in this absurdity. Thousands of men, during many centuries, in thousands of ways, sought to change the nature of lead and iron so that they might be transformed to gold. They had no conception of the real nature of things. They supposed that they had originally been created by a kind of magic, and could by the same kind of magic be changed into something else. They were all believers in the supernatural. So, in mechanics, men sought for the impossible. They were believers in perpetual motion and they tried to make machines that would through a combination of levers furnish the force that propelled them.

Thousands of ingenious men wasted their lives in the vain effort to produce machines that would in some wonderful way create a force. They did not know that force is eternal, that it can neither be created nor destroyed. They did not know that a machine having perpetual motion would necessarily be a universe within itself, or independent of this, and in which the force called friction would be necessarily changed, without loss, into the force that propelled,—the machine itself causing or creating the original force that put it in motion. And yet in spite of all the absurdities involved, for many centuries men, regarded by their fellows as intelligent and learned, tried to discover the great principle of "perpetual motion."

Our ancestors studied the stars because in them they thought it possible to learn the fate of nations, the life and destiny of the individual. Eclipses, wandering comets, the relations of certain stars were the forerunners or causes of prosperity or disaster, of the downfall or upbuilding of kingdoms. Astrology was believed to be a science, and those who studied the stars were consulted by warriors, statesmen and kings. The account of the star that led the wise men of the East to the infant Christ was

written by a believer in astrology. It would be hard to overstate the time and talent wasted in the study of this so-called science. The men who believed in astrology thought that they lived in a supernatural world—a world in which causes and effects had no necessary connection with each other—in which all events were the result of magic and necromancy.

Even now, at the close of the nineteenth century, there are hundreds and hundreds of men who make their living by casting the horoscopes of idiots and imbeciles.

The "perpetual motion" of the mechanic, the universal solvent of the chemist, the changing of lead into gold, the foretelling events by the relations of stars were all born of the same ignorance of nature that caused the theologian to imagine an uncaused cause as the cause of all causes and effects.

The theologian insisted that there was something superior to nature, and that that something was the creator and preserver of nature.

Of course there is no more evidence of the existence of that "something" than there is of the philosopher's stone.

The mechanics who now believe in perpetual motion are insane, so are the chemists who seek to

change one metal into another, so are the honest astrologers, and in a few more years the same can truthfully be said of the honest theologians.

Many of our ancestors believed in the existence of and sought for the Fountain of Perpetual Youth. They believed that an old man could stoop and drink from this fountain and that while he drank his gray hairs would slowly change, that the wrinkles would disappear, that his dim eyes would brighten and grow clear, his heart throb with manhood's force and rhythm, while in his pallid cheeks would burst into blossom the roses of health.

They were believers in the supernatural, the miraculous, and nothing seemed more probable than the impossible.

VII.

MOST people use names in place of arguments. They are satisfied to be disciples, followers of the illustrious dead. Each church, each party has a list of "great men," and they throw the names of these men at each other when discussing their dogmas and creeds.

Men prove the inspiration of the Bible, the divinity of Christ by the admissions of soldiers, statesmen and kings. And in the same way they establish the existence of heaven and hell. Dispute one of their dogmas and you will instantly be told that Isaac Newton or Matthew Hale was on the other side, and you will be asked whether you claim to be superior to Newton or Hale. In our own country the ministers, to establish their absurdities, quote the opinions of Webster and of other successful politicians as though such opinions were demonstrations.

Most Protestants will cheerfully admit that they are inferior in brain and genius to some men who have lived and died in the Catholic faith; that in the matter

of preaching funeral sermons they are not equal to Bossuet; that their letters are not as interesting and polished as those written by Pascal; that Torquemada excelled them in the genius of organization, and that for planning a massacre they would not for a moment claim the palm from Catherine de Medici, and yet after these admissions, these same Protestants would insist that the Pope is an unblushing impostor, and the Catholic Church a vampire.

The so-called "great men" of the world have been mistaken in many things. Lord Bacon denied the Copernican system of astronomy and believed to the day of his death that the sun and stars journeyed about this little earth. Matthew Hale was a firm believer in the existence of witches and wizards. John Wesley believed that earthquakes were caused by sin and that they could be prevented by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ. John Calvin regarded murder as one of the means to preserve the purity of the gospel. Martin Luther denounced Galileo as a fool because he was opposed to the astronomy of Moses. Webster was in favor of the Fugitive Slave Law and held the book of Job in high esteem. He wanted votes and he knelt to the South. He wanted votes and he flattered the church.

VIII.

VOLUMES might be written on the follies and imbecilities of "great" men.

Only a few years ago the really great men were persecuted, imprisoned or burned. In this way the church was enabled to keep the "great" men on her side.

As a matter of fact it is impossible to tell what the "great" men really thought. We only know what they said. These "great" men had families to support, they had a prejudice against prisons and objected to being burned, and it may be that they thought one way and talked another.

The priests said to these men: "Agree with the creed, talk on our side, or you will be persecuted to the death." Then the priests turned to the people and cried: "Hear what the great men say."

For a few years we have had something like liberty of speech and many men have told their

thoughts. Now the theologians are not quite so apt to appeal to names as formerly. The really great are not on their side. The leaders of modern thought are not Christians. Now the unbelievers can repeat names — names that stand for intellectual triumphs. Humboldt, Helmholtz, Haeckel and Huxley, Darwin, Spencer and Tyndall and many others, stand for investigation, discovery, for vast achievements in the world of thought. These men were and are thinkers and they had and have the courage to express their thoughts. They were not and are not puppets of priests, or the trembling worshipers of ghosts.

For many years, most of the presidents of American colleges have been engaged in the pious work of trying to prevent the intellectual advancement of the race. To such an extent have they succeeded that none of their students have been or are great scientists.

For the purpose of bolstering their creed the orthodox do not now repeat the names of the living, their witnesses are in the cemetery. All the "great" Christians are dead.

To-day we want arguments, not names, reasons, not opinions. It is degrading to blindly follow a

man, or a church. Nothing is nobler than to be governed by reason. To be vanquished by the truth is to be a victor. The man who follows is a slave. The man who thinks is free.

We must remember that most men have been controlled by their surroundings. Most of the intelligent men in Turkey are followers of Mahomet. They were rocked in the cradle of the Koran, they received their religious opinions as they did their features — from their parents. Their opinion on the subject of religion is of no possible value. The same may be said of the Christians of our country. Their belief is the result, not of thought, of investigation, but of surroundings.

All religions have been the result of ignorance, and the seeds were sown and planted in the long night of savagery.

In the decline of the Roman power, in the times when prosperity died, when commerce almost ceased, when the sceptre of authority fell from weak and nerveless hands, when arts were lost and the achievements of the past forgotten or unknown, then Christians came, and holding in contempt all earthly things, told their fellows of another world— of joy eternal beyond the clouds.

If learning had not been lost, if the people had been educated, if they had known the literature of Greece and Rome, if they had been familiar with the tragedies of Æschylus, Sophocles and Euripides, with the philosophy of Zeno and Epicurus, with the orations of Demosthenes; if they had known the works of art, the miracles of genius, the passions in marble, the dreams in stone; if they had known the history of Rome; if they had understood Lucretius, Cicero and Cæsar; if they had studied the laws, the decisions of the Prætors; if they had known the thoughts of all the mighty dead, there would have been no soil on which the seeds of Christian superstition could have taken root and grown.

But the early Christians hated art, and song, and joy. They slandered and maligned the human race, insisted that the world had been blighted by the curse of God, that this life should be used only in making preparation for the next, that education filled the mind with doubt, and science led the soul from God.

IX.

THERE are two ways. One is to live for God. That has been tried, and the result has always been the same. It was tried in Palestine many years ago and the people who tried it were not protected by their God. They were conquered, overwhelmed and exiled. They lost their country and were scattered over the earth. For many centuries they expected assistance from their God. They believed that they would be gathered together again, that their cities and temples and altars would be rebuilt, that they would again be the favorites of Jehovah, that with his help they would overcome their enemies and rule the world. Century by century the hope has grown weaker and weaker, until now it is regarded by the intelligent as a foolish dream.

Living for God was tried in Switzerland and it ended in slavery and torture. Every avenue that led to improvement, to progress, was closed. Only those in authority were allowed to express their

thoughts. No one tried to increase the happiness of people in this world. Innocent pleasure was regarded as sin, laughter was suppressed, all natural joy despised, and love itself denounced as sin.

They amused themselves with fasting and prayer, hearing sermons, talking about endless pain, committing to memory the genealogies in the Old Testament, and now and then burning one of their fellow-men.

Living for God was tried in Scotland. The people became the serfs and slaves of the blessed Kirk. The ministers became petty tyrants. They poisoned the very springs of life. They interfered with every family, invaded the privacy of every home, sowed the seeds of superstition and fear, and filled the darkness with devils. They claimed to be divinely inspired, that they delivered the messages of God, that to deny their authority was blasphemy, and that all who refused to do their bidding would suffer eternal pain. Under their government Scotland was a land of sighing and sorrow, of grief and pain. The people were slaves.

Living for God was tried in New England. A government was formed in accordance with the Old Testament. The laws, for the most part, were petty

and absurd, the penalties cruel and bloody to the last degree. Religious liberty was regarded as a crime, as an insult to God. Persons differing in belief from those in power, were persecuted, whipped, maimed and exiled. People supposed to be in league with the devil were imprisoned or killed. A theological government was established, ministers were the agents of God, they dictated the laws and fixed the penalties. Everything was under the supervision of the clergy. They had no pity, no mercy. With all their hearts they hated the natural. They promised happiness in another world, and did all they could to destroy the pleasures of this.

Their greatest consolation, their purest joy was found in their belief that all who failed to obey their words, to wear their yoke, would suffer infinite torture in the eternal dungeons of hell.

Living for God was tried in the Dark Ages. Thousands of scaffolds were wet with blood, countless swords were thrust through human hearts. The flames of fagots consumed the flesh of men, dungeons became the homes of those who thought. In the name of God every cruelty was practiced, every crime committed, and liberty perished from the earth. Everywhere the result has been the

same. Living for God has filled the world with blood and flame.

There is another way. Let us live for man, for this world. Let us develop the brain and civilize the heart. Let us ascertain the conditions of happiness and live in accordance with them. Let us do what we can for the destruction of ignorance, poverty and crime. Let us do our best to supply the wants of the body, to satisfy the hunger of the mind, to ascertain the secrets of nature, to the end that we may make the invisible forces the tireless servants of the human race, and fill the world with happy homes.

Let the gods take care of themselves. Let us live for man. Let us remember that those who have sought for the truths of nature have never persecuted their fellow-men. The astronomers and chemists have forged no chains, built no dungeons. The geologists have invented no instrument of torture. The philosophers have not demonstrated the truth of their theories by burning their neighbors. The great infidels, the thinkers, have lived for the good of man.

It is noble to seek for truth, to be intellectually honest, to give to others a true transcript of your mind, a photograph of your thoughts in honest words.

X.

THERE are two ways: The narrow way along which the selfish go in single file, not wide enough for husband and wife to walk side by side while children clasp their hands. The narrow road over the desert of superstition "with here and there a traveler." The narrow grass-grown path, filled with flints and broken glass, bordered by thistles and thorns, where the twice-born limping walk with bleeding feet. If by this path you see a flower, do not pick it. It is a temptation. Beneath its leaves a serpent lies. Keep your eyes on the New Jerusalem. Do not look back for wife or child or friend. Think only of saving your own soul. You will be just as happy in heaven with all you love in hell. Believe, have faith, and you will be rewarded for the goodness of another. Look neither to the right nor left. Keep on, straight on, and you will save your worthless, withered, selfish soul.

This is the narrow road that leads from earth to the Christian's heartless heaven.

There is another way—the broad road.

Give me the wide and ample way, the way broad enough for us all to go together. The broad way where the birds sing, where the sun shines and the streams murmur. The broad way, through the fields where the flowers grow, over the daisied slopes where sunlight, lingering, seems to sleep and dream.

Let us go the broad way with the great world, with science and art, with music and the drama, with all that gladdens, thrills, refines and calms.

Let us go the wide road with husband and wife, with children and friends and with all there is of joy and love between the dawn and dusk of life's strange day.

This world is a great orange tree filled with blossoms, with ripening and ripened fruit, while, underneath the bending boughs, the fallen slowly turn to dust.

Each orange is a life. Let us squeeze it dry, get all the juice there is, so that when death comes we can say: "There is nothing left but withered peel."

Let us travel the broad and natural way. Let us live for man.

To think of what the world has suffered from superstition, from religion, from the worship of beast and stone and god, is almost enough to make one insane. Think of the long, long night of ignorance and fear! Think of the agony, the sufferings of the past, of the days that are dead!

I look. In gloomy caves I see the sacred serpents coiled, waiting for their sacrificial prey. I see their open jaws, their restless tongues, their glittering eyes, their cruel fangs. I see them seize and crush in many horrid folds the helpless children given by fathers and mothers to appease the Serpent-God. I look again. I see temples wrought of stone and gilded with barbaric gold. I see altars red with human blood. I see the solemn priests thrust knives in the white breasts of girls. I look again. I see other temples and other altars, where greedy flames devour the flesh and blood of babes. I see other temples and other priests and other altars dripping with the blood of oxen, lambs and doves.

I look again. I see other temples and other priests and other altars on which are sacrificed the liberties of man. I look. I see the cathedrals of

God, the huts of peasants, the robes of priests and kings, the rags of honest men. I look again. The lovers of God are the murderers of men. I see dungeons filled with the noblest and the best. I see exiles, wanderers, outcasts, millions of martyrs, widows and orphans. I see the cunning instruments of torture and hear the shrieks and sobs and moans of millions dead.

I see the dungeon's gloom, I hear the clank of chains. I see the fagot's flames, the scorched and blackened face, the writhing limbs. I hear the jeers and scoffs of pious fiends. I see the victim on the rack, I hear the tendons as they break. I see a world beneath the feet of priests, liberty in chains, every virtue a crime, every crime a virtue, intelligence despised, stupidity sainted, hypocrisy crowned and the white forehead of honor wearing the brand of shame. This was.

I look again, and in the East of hope's fair sky the first pale light shed by the herald star gives promise of another dawn. I look, and from the ashes, blood and tears the heroes leap to bless the future and avenge the past. I see a world at war, and in the storm and chaos of the deadly strife thrones crumble, altars fall, chains break, creeds change.

The highest peaks are touched with holy light. The dawn has blossomed. I look again. I see discoverers sailing across mysterious seas. I see inventors cunningly enslave the forces of the world. I see the houses being built for schools. Teachers, interpreters of nature, slowly take the place of priests. Philosophers arise, thinkers give the world their wealth of brain, and lips grow rich with words of truth. This is.

I look again, but toward the future now. The popes and priests and kings are gone,—the altars and the thrones have mingled with the dust,—the aristocracy of land and cloud have perished from the earth and air, and all the gods are dead. A new religion sheds its glory on mankind. It is the gospel of this world, the religion of the body, of the heart and brain, the evangel of health and joy. I see a world at peace, where labor reaps its true reward, a world without prisons, without workhouses, without asylums for the insane, a world on which the gibbet's shadow does not fall, a world where the poor girl, trying to win bread with the needle, the needle that has been called "the asp for the breast of the poor," is not driven to the desperate choice of crime or death, of suicide or shame. I see a world without

the beggar's outstretched palm, the miser's heartless, stony stare, the piteous wail of want, the pallid face of crime, the livid lips of lies, the cruel eyes of scorn. I see a race without disease of flesh or brain, shapely and fair, the married harmony of form and use, and as I look life lengthens, fear dies, joy deepens, love intensifies. The world is free. This shall be.

ABOUT THE HOLY BIBLE.

ABOUT THE HOLY BIBLE.

SOMEBODY ought to tell the truth about the Bible. The preachers dare not, because they would be driven from their pulpits. Professors in colleges dare not, because they would lose their salaries. Politicians dare not. They would be defeated. Editors dare not. They would lose subscribers. Merchants dare not, because they might lose customers. Men of fashion dare not, fearing that they would lose caste. Even clerks dare not, because they might be discharged. And so I thought I would do it myself.

There are many millions of people who believe the Bible to be the inspired word of God—millions who think that this book is staff and guide, counselor and consoler; that it fills the present with peace and the future with hope—millions who be-

lieve that it is the fountain of law, justice and mercy, and that to its wise and benign teachings the world is indebted for its liberty, wealth and civilization—millions who imagine that this book is a revelation from the wisdom and love of God to the brain and heart of man—millions who regard this book as a torch that conquers the darkness of death, and pours its radiance on another world—a world without a tear.

They forget its ignorance and savagery, its hatred of liberty, its religious persecution; they remember heaven, but they forget the dungeon of eternal pain.

They forget that it imprisons the brain and corrupts the heart. They forget that it is the enemy of intellectual freedom. Liberty is my religion. Liberty of hand and brain—of thought and labor.

Liberty is a word hated by kings—loathed by popes. It is a word that shatters thrones and altars—that leaves the crowned without subjects, and the outstretched hand of superstition without alms. Liberty is the blossom and fruit of justice—the perfume of mercy. Liberty is the seed and soil, the air and light, the dew and rain of progress, love and joy.

I.

THE ORIGIN OF THE BIBLE.

A FEW wandering families—poor, wretched, without education, art or power; descendants of those who had been enslaved for four hundred years; ignorant as the inhabitants of Central Africa, had just escaped from their masters to the desert of Sinai.

Their leader was Moses, a man who had been raised in the family of Pharaoh and had been taught the law and mythology of Egypt. For the purpose of controlling his followers he pretended that he was instructed and assisted by Jehovah, the God of these wanderers.

Everything that happened was attributed to the interference of this God. Moses declared that he met this God face to face; that on Sinai's top from the hands of this God he had received the tables of stone on which, by the finger of this God, the Ten Commandments had been written, and that, in addition to this, Jehovah had made known the sacrifices and ceremonies that were pleasing to him and the laws by which the people should be governed.

In this way the Jewish religion and the Mosaic Code were established.

It is now claimed that this religion and these laws were and are revealed and established for all mankind.

At that time these wanderers had no commerce with other nations, they had no written language, they could neither read nor write. They had no means by which they could make this revelation known to other nations, and so it remained buried in the jargon of a few ignorant, impoverished and unknown tribes for more than two thousand years.

Many centuries after Moses, the leader, was dead—many centuries after all his followers had passed away—the Pentateuch was written, the work of many writers, and to give it force and authority it was claimed that Moses was the author.

We now know that the Pentateuch was not written by Moses.

Towns are mentioned that were not in existence when Moses lived.

Money, not coined until centuries after his death, is mentioned.

So, many of the laws were not applicable to wanderers on the desert—laws about agriculture, about the sacrifice of oxen, sheep and doves, about

the weaving of cloth, about ornaments of gold and silver, about the cultivation of land, about harvest, about the threshing of grain, about houses and temples, about cities of refuge, and about many other subjects of no possible application to a few starving wanderers over the sands and rocks.

It is now not only admitted by intelligent and honest theologians that Moses was not the author of the Pentateuch, but they all admit that no one knows who the authors were, or who wrote any one of these books, or a chapter or a line. We know that the books were not written in the same generation; that they were not all written by one person; that they are filled with mistakes and contradictions.

It is also admitted that Joshua did not write the book that bears his name, because it refers to events that did not happen until long after his death.

No one knows, or pretends to know, the author of Judges; all we know is that it was written centuries after all the judges had ceased to exist. No one knows the author of Ruth, nor of First and Second Samuel; all we know is that Samuel did not write the books that bear his name. In the 25th chapter of First Samuel is an account of Samuel's death, and in the 27th chapter is an account of the raising of Samuel by the Witch of Endor.

No one knows the author of First and Second Kings or First and Second Chronicles; all we know is that these books are of no value.

We know that the Psalms were not written by David. In the Psalms the Captivity is spoken of, and that did not happen until about five hundred years after David slept with his fathers.

We know that Solomon did not write the Proverbs or the Song; that Isaiah was not the author of the book that bears his name; that no one knows the author of Job, Ecclesiastes, or Esther, or of any book in the Old Testament, with the exception of Ezra.

We know that God is not mentioned or in any way referred to in the book of Esther. We know, too, that the book is cruel, absurd and impossible.

God is not mentioned in the Song of Solomon, the best book in the Old Testament.

And we know that Ecclesiastes was written by an unbeliever.

We know, too, that the Jews themselves had not decided as to what books were inspired — were authentic — until the second century after Christ.

We know that the idea of inspiration was of slow growth, and that the inspiration was determined by those who had certain ends to accomplish.

II.

IS THE OLD TESTAMENT INSPIRED?

IF it is, it should be a book that no man—no number of men—could produce.

It should contain the perfection of philosophy.

It should perfectly accord with every fact in nature.

There should be no mistakes in astronomy, geology, or as to any subject or science.

Its morality should be the highest, the purest.

Its laws and regulations for the control of conduct should be just, wise, perfect, and perfectly adapted to the accomplishment of the ends desired.

It should contain nothing calculated to make man cruel, revengeful, vindictive or infamous.

It should be filled with intelligence, justice, purity, honesty, mercy and the spirit of liberty.

It should be opposed to strife and war, to slavery and lust, to ignorance, credulity and superstition.

It should develop the brain and civilize the heart.

It should satisfy the heart and brain of the best and wisest.

It should be true.

Does the Old Testament satisfy this standard?

Is there anything in the Old Testament—in history, in theory, in law, in government, in morality, in science—above and beyond the ideas, the beliefs, the customs and prejudices of its authors and the people among whom they lived?

Is there one ray of light from any supernatural source?

The ancient Hebrews believed that this earth was the centre of the universe, and that the sun, moon and stars were specks in the sky.

With this the Bible agrees.

They thought the earth was flat, with four corners; that the sky, the firmament, was solid—the floor of Jehovah's house.

The Bible teaches the same.

They imagined that the sun journeyed about the earth, and that by stopping the sun the day could be lengthened.

The Bible agrees with this.

They believed that Adam and Eve were the first man and woman; that they had been created but a few years before, and that they, the Hebrews, were their direct descendants.

This the Bible teaches.

If anything is, or can be, certain, the writers of the Bible were mistaken about creation, astronomy,

geology; about the causes of phenomena, the origin of evil and the cause of death.

Now, it must be admitted that if an Infinite Being is the author of the Bible, he knew all sciences, all facts, and could not have made a mistake.

If, then, there are mistakes, misconceptions, false theories, ignorant myths and blunders in the Bible, it must have been written by finite beings; that is to say, by ignorant and mistaken men.

Nothing can be clearer than this.

For centuries the church insisted that the Bible was absolutely true; that it contained no mistakes; that the story of creation was true; that its astronomy and geology were in accord with the facts; that the scientists who differed with the Old Testament were infidels and atheists.

Now this has changed. The educated Christians admit that the writers of the Bible were not inspired as to any science. They now say that God, or Jehovah, did not inspire the writers of his book for the purpose of instructing the world about astronomy, geology, or any science. They now admit that the inspired men who wrote the Old Testament knew nothing about any science, and that they wrote about

the earth and stars, the sun and moon, in accordance with the general ignorance of the time.

It required many centuries to force the theologians to this admission. Reluctantly, full of malice and hatred, the priests retired from the field, leaving the victory with science.

They took another position:

They declared that the authors, or rather the writers, of the Bible were inspired in spiritual and moral things; that Jehovah wanted to make known to his children his will and his infinite love for his children; that Jehovah, seeing his people wicked, ignorant and depraved, wished to make them merciful and just, wise and spiritual, and that the Bible is inspired in its laws, in the religion it teaches and in its ideas of government.

This is the issue now. Is the Bible any nearer right in its ideas of justice, of mercy, of morality or of religion than in its conception of the sciences?

Is it moral?

It upholds slavery—it sanctions polygamy.

Could a devil have done worse?

Is it merciful?

In war it raised the black flag; it commanded the destruction, the massacre, of all—of the old, infirm, and helpless—of wives and babes.

Were its laws inspired?

Hundreds of offences were punished with death. To pick up sticks on Sunday, to murder your father on Monday, were equal crimes. There is in the literature of the world no bloodier code. The law of revenge—of retaliation—was the law of Jehovah. An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a limb for a limb.

This is savagery—not philosophy.

Is it just and reasonable?

The Bible is opposed to religious toleration—to religious liberty. Whoever differed with the majority was stoned to death. Investigation was a crime. Husbands were ordered to denounce and to assist in killing their unbelieving wives.

It is the enemy of Art. "Thou shalt make no graven image." This was the death of Art.

Palestine never produced a painter or a sculptor.

Is the Bible civilized?

It upholds lying, larceny, robbery, murder, the selling of diseased meat to strangers, and even the sacrifice of human beings to Jehovah.

Is it philosophical?

It teaches that the sins of a people can be transferred to an animal—to a goat. It makes maternity an offence for which a sin offering had to be made.

It was wicked to give birth to a boy, and twice as wicked to give birth to a girl.

To make hair-oil like that used by the priests was an offence punishable with death.

The blood of a bird killed over running water was regarded as medicine.

Would a civilized God daub his altars with the blood of oxen, lambs and doves? Would he make all his priests butchers? Would he delight in the smell of burning flesh?

III.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS.

SOME Christian lawyers—some eminent and stupid judges—have said and still say, that the Ten Commandments are the foundation of all law.

Nothing could be more absurd. Long before these commandments were given there were codes of laws in India and Egypt—laws against murder, perjury, larceny, adultery and fraud. Such laws are as old as human society; as old as the love of life; as old as industry; as the idea of property; as old as human love.

All of the Ten Commandments that are good were old; all that were new are foolish. If Jehovah had been civilized he would have left out the commandment about keeping the Sabbath, and in its place would have said: "Thou shalt not enslave thy fellow-men." He would have omitted the one about swearing, and said: "The man shall have but one wife, and the woman but one husband." He would have left out the one about graven images, and in its stead would have said: "Thou shalt not wage wars

of extermination, and thou shalt not unsheathe the sword except in self-defence."

If Jehovah had been civilized, how much grander the Ten Commandments would have been.

All that we call progress—the enfranchisement of man, of labor, the substitution of imprisonment for death, of fine for imprisonment, the destruction of polygamy, the establishing of free speech, of the rights of conscience; in short, all that has tended to the development and civilization of man; all the results of investigation, observation, experience and free thought; all that man has accomplished for the benefit of man since the close of the Dark Ages—has been done in spite of the Old Testament.

Let me further illustrate the morality, the mercy, the philosophy and goodness of the Old Testament:

THE STORY OF ACHAN.

Joshua took the City of Jericho. Before the fall of the city he declared that all the spoil taken should be given to the Lord.

In spite of this order Achan secreted a garment, some silver and gold.

Afterward Joshua tried to take the city of Ai. He failed and many of his soldiers were slain.

Joshua sought for the cause of his defeat and he found that Achan had secreted a garment, two hundred shekels of silver and a wedge of gold. To this Achan confessed.

And thereupon Joshua took Achan, his sons and his daughters, his oxen and his sheep—stoned them all to death and burned their bodies.

There is nothing to show that the sons and daughters had committed any crime. Certainly, the oxen and sheep should not have been stoned to death for the crime of their owner. This was the justice, the mercy, of Jehovah!

After Joshua had committed this crime, with the help of Jehovah he captured the city of Ai.

THE STORY OF ELISHA.

"And he went up thence unto Bethel, and as he was going up by the way there came forth little children out of the city and mocked him, and said unto him, 'Go up, thou baldhead.'

"And he turned back and looked at them, and cursed them in the name of the Lord. And there came forth two she-bears out of the wood and tore forty and two children of them."

This was the work of the good God—the merciful Jehovah!

THE STORY OF DANIEL.

King Darius had honored and exalted Daniel, and the native princes were jealous. So they induced the king to sign a decree to the effect that any man who should make a petition to any god or man except to King Darius, for thirty days, should be cast into the den of lions.

Afterward these men found that Daniel, with his face toward Jerusalem, prayed three times a day to Jehovah.

Thereupon Daniel was cast into the den of lions; a stone was placed at the mouth of the den and sealed with the king's seal.

The king passed a bad night. The next morning he went to the den and cried out to Daniel. Daniel answered and told the king that God had sent his angel and shut the mouths of the lions.

Daniel was taken out alive and well, and the king was converted and believed in Daniel's God.

Darius, being then a believer in the true God, sent for the men who had accused Daniel, and for their wives and their children, and cast them all into the lions' den.

"And the lions had the mastery of them, and brake all their bones in pieces, or ever they came at the bottom of the pit."

What had the wives and little children done? How had they offended King Darius, the believer in Jehovah? Who protected Daniel? Jehovah! Who failed to protect the innocent wives and children? Jehovah!

THE STORY OF JOSEPH.

Pharaoh had a dream, and this dream was interpreted by Joseph.

According to this interpretation there was to be in Egypt seven years of plenty, followed by seven years of famine. Joseph advised Pharaoh to buy all the surplus of the seven plentiful years and store it up against the years of famine.

Pharaoh appointed Joseph as his minister or agent, and ordered him to buy the grain of the plentiful years.

Then came the famine. The people came to the king for help. He told them to go to Joseph and do as he said.

Joseph sold corn to the Egyptians until all their money was gone—until he had it all.

When the money was gone the people said: "Give us corn and we will give you our cattle."

Joseph let them have corn until all their cattle, their horses and their flocks had been given to him.

Then the people said: "Give us corn and we will give you our lands."

So Joseph let them have corn until all their lands were gone.

But the famine continued, and so the poor wretches sold themselves, and they became the servants of Pharoah.

Then Joseph gave them seed, and made an agreement with them that they should forever give one-fifth of all they raised to Pharaoh.

Who enabled Joseph to interpret the dream of Pharaoh? Jehovah! Did he know at the time that Joseph would use the information thus given to rob and enslave the people of Egypt? Yes. Who produced the famine? Jehovah!

It is perfectly apparent that the Jews did not think of Jehovah as the God of Egypt—the God of all the world. He was their God, and theirs alone. Other nations had gods, but Jehovah was the greatest of all. He hated other nations and other gods, and abhorred all religions except the worship of himself.

IV.

WHAT IS IT ALL WORTH?

WILL some Christian scholar tell us the value of Genesis?

We know that it is not true—that it contradicts itself. There are two accounts of the creation in the first and second chapters. In the first account birds and beasts were created before man.

In the second, man was created before the birds and beasts.

In the first, fowls are made out of the water.

In the second, fowls are made out of the ground.

In the first, Adam and Eve are created together.

In the second, Adam is made; then the beasts and birds, and then Eve is created from one of Adam's ribs.

These stories are far older than the Pentateuch.

Persian: God created the world in six days, a man called Adama, a woman called Evah, and then rested.

The Etruscan, Babylonian, Phœnician, Chaldean and the Egyptian stories are much the same.

The Persians, Greeks, Egyptians, Chinese and

Hindus have their Garden of Eden and the Tree of Life.

So the Persians, the Babylonians, the Nubians, the people of Southern India, all had the story of the fall of man and the subtle serpent.

The Chinese say that sin came into the world by the disobedience of woman. And even the Tahitians tell us that man was created from the earth, and the first woman from one of his bones.

All these stories are equally authentic and of equal value to the world, and all the authors were equally inspired.

We know also that the story of the flood is much older than the book of Genesis, and we know besides that it is not true.

We know that this story in Genesis was copied from the Chaldean. There you find all about the rain, the ark, the animals, the dove that was sent out three times, and the mountain on which the ark rested.

So the Hindus, Chinese, Parsees, Persians, Greeks, Mexicans and Scandinavians have substantially the same story.

We also know that the account of the Tower of Babel is an ignorant and childish fable.

What then is left in this inspired book of

Genesis? Is there a word calculated to develop the heart or brain? Is there an elevated thought—any great principle—anything poetic—any word that bursts into blossom?

Is there anything except a dreary and detailed statement of things that never happened?

Is there anything in Exodus calculated to make men generous, loving and noble?

Is it well to teach children that God tortured the innocent cattle of the Egyptians—bruised them to death with hailstones—on account of the sins of Pharoah?

Does it make us merciful to believe that God killed the firstborn of the Egyptians—the firstborn of the poor and suffering people—of the poor girl working at the mill—because of the wickedness of the king?

Can we believe that the gods of Egypt worked miracles? Did they change water into blood, and sticks into serpents?

In Exodus there is not one original thought or line of value.

We know, if we know anything, that this book was written by savages—savages who believed in slavery, polygamy and wars of extermination. We know that the story told is impossible, and that the miracles

were never performed. This book admits that there are other gods besides Jehovah. In the 17th chapter is this verse: "Now I know that the Lord is greater than all gods, for, in the thing wherein they dealt proudly, he was above them."

So, in this blessed book is taught the duty of human sacrifice—the sacrifice of babes.

In the 22d chapter is this command: "Thou shalt not delay to offer the first of thy ripe fruits and of thy liquors: the first-born of thy sons thou shalt give unto me."

Has Exodus been a help or a hindrance to the human race?

Take from Exodus the laws common to all nations, and is there anything of value left?

Is there anything in Leviticus of importance? Is there a chapter worth reading? What interest have we in the clothes of priests, the curtains and candles of the tabernacle, the tongs and shovels of the altar or the hair-oil used by the Levites?

Of what use the cruel code, the frightful punishments, the curses, the falsehoods and the miracles of this ignorant and infamous book?

And what is there in the book of Numbers—with its sacrifices and water of jealousy, with its shew-bread and spoons, its kids and fine flour, its oil and

candlesticks, its cucumbers, onions and manna—to assist and instruct mankind? What interest have we in the rebellion of Korah, the water of separation, the ashes of a red heifer, the brazen serpent, the water that followed the people uphill and down for forty years, and the inspired donkey of the prophet Balaam? Have these absurdities and cruelties—these childish, savage superstitions—helped to civilize the world?

Is there anything in Joshua—with its wars, its murders and massacres, its swords dripping with the blood of mothers and babes, its tortures, maimings and mutilations, its fraud and fury, its hatred and revenge—calculated to improve the world?

Does not every chapter shock the heart of a good man? Is it a book to be read by children?

The book of Joshua is as merciless as famine, as ferocious as the heart of a wild beast. It is a history—a justification—a sanctification of nearly every crime.

The book of Judges is about the same, nothing but war and bloodshed; the horrible story of Jael and Sisera; of Gideon and his trumpets and pitchers; of Jephtha and his daughter, whom he murdered to please Jehovah.

Here we find the story of Samson, in which a sun-god is changed to a Hebrew giant.

Read this book of Joshua—read of the slaughter of women, of wives, of mothers and babes—read its impossible miracles, its ruthless crimes, and all done according to the commands of Jehovah, and tell me whether this book is calculated to make us forgiving, generous and loving.

I admit that the history of Ruth is in some respects a beautiful and touching story; that it is naturally told, and that her love for Naomi was deep and pure. But in the matter of courtship we would hardly advise our daughters to follow the example of Ruth. Still, we must remember that Ruth was a widow.

Is there anything worth reading in the first and second books of Samuel? Ought a prophet of God to hew a captured king in pieces? Is the story of the ark, its capture and return of importance to us? Is it possible that it was right, just and merciful to kill fifty thousand men because they had looked into a box? Of what use to us are the wars of Saul and David, the stories of Goliath and the Witch of Endor? Why should Jehovah have killed Uzzah for putting forth his hand to steady the ark, and forgiven David for murdering Uriah and stealing his wife?

According to "Samuel," David took a census of

the people. This excited the wrath of Jehovah, and as a punishment he allowed David to choose seven years of famine, a flight of three months from pursuing enemies, or three days of pestilence. David, having confidence in God, chose the three days of pestilence; and, thereupon, God, the compassionate, on account of the sin of David, killed seventy thousand innocent men!

Under the same circumstances, what would a devil have done?

Is there anything in First and Second Kings that suggests the idea of inspiration?

When David is dying he tells his son Solomon to murder Joab—not to let his hoar head go down to the grave in peace. With his last breath he commands his son to bring down the hoar head of Shimei to the grave with blood. Having uttered these merciful words, the good David, the man after God's heart, slept with his fathers.

Was it necessary to inspire the man who wrote the history of the building of the temple, the story of the visit of the Queen of Sheba, or to tell the number of Solomon's wives?

What care we for the withering of Jeroboam's hand, the prophecy of Jehu, or the story of Elijah and the ravens?

Can we believe that Elijah brought flames from heaven, or that he went at last to Paradise in a chariot of fire?

Can we believe in the multiplication of the widow's oil by Elisha, that an army was smitten with blindness, or that an axe floated in the water?

Does it civilize us to read about the beheading of the seventy sons of Ahab, the putting out of the eyes of Zedekiah and the murder of his sons? Is there one word in First and Second Kings calculated to make men better?

First and Second Chronicles is but a re-telling of what is told in First and Second Kings. The same old stories—a little left out, a little added, but in no respect made better or worse.

The book of Ezra is of no importance. He tells us that Cyrus, King of Persia, issued a proclamation for building a temple at Jerusalem, and that he declared Jehovah to be the real and only God.

Nothing could be more absurd. Ezra tells us about the return from captivity, the building of the temple, the dedication, a few prayers, and this is all. This book is of no importance, of no use.

Nehemiah is about the same, only it tells of the building of the wall, the complaints of the people about taxes, a list of those who returned from

Babylon, a catalogue of those who dwelt at Jerusalem, and the dedication of the walls.

Not a word in Nehemiah worth reading.

Then comes the book of Esther:

In this we are told that King Ahasueras was intoxicated; that he sent for his Queen, Vashti, to come and show herself to him and his guests. Vashti refused to appear.

This maddened the king, and he ordered that from every province the most beautiful girls should be brought before him that he might choose one in place of Vashti.

Among others was brought Esther, a Jewess. She was chosen and became the wife of the king. Then a gentleman by the name of Haman wanted to have all the Jews killed, and the king, not knowing that Esther was of that race, signed a decree that all the Jews should be killed.

Through the efforts of Mordecai and Esther the decree was annulled and the Jews were saved.

Haman prepared a gallows on which to have Mordecai hanged, but the good Esther so managed matters that Haman and his ten sons were hanged on the gallows that Haman had built, and the Jews were allowed to murder more than seventy-five thousand of the king's subjects.

This is the inspired story of Esther.

In the book of Job we find some elevated sentiments, some sublime and foolish thoughts, something of the wonder and sublimity of nature, the joys and sorrows of life; but the story is infamous.

Some of the Psalms are good, many are indifferent, and a few are infamous. In them are mingled the vices and virtues. There are verses that elevate, verses that degrade. There are prayers for forgiveness and revenge. In the literature of the world there is nothing more heartless, more infamous, than the 109th Psalm.

In the Proverbs there is much shrewdness, many pithy and prudent maxims, many wise sayings. The same ideas are expressed in many ways—the wisdom of economy and silence, the dangers of vanity and idleness. Some are trivial, some are foolish, and many are wise. These proverbs are not generous—not altruistic. Sayings to the same effect are found among all nations.

Ecclesiastes is the most thoughtful book in the Bible. It was written by an unbeliever—a philosopher—an agnostic. Take out the interpolations, and it is in accordance with the thought of the nineteenth century. In this book are found the most philosophic and poetic passages in the Bible.

After crossing the desert of death and crime—

after reading the Pentateuch, Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings and Chronicles—it is delightful to reach this grove of palms, called the "Song of Solomon." A drama of love—of human love; a poem without Jehovah—a poem born of the heart and true to the divine instincts of the soul.

"I sleep, but my heart waketh."

Isaiah is the work of several. Its swollen words, its vague imagery, its prophecies and curses, its ravings against kings and nations, its laughter at the wisdom of man, its hatred of joy, have not the slightest tendency to increase the well-being of man.

In this book is recorded the absurdest of all miracles. The shadow on the dial is turned back ten degrees, in order to satisfy Hezekiah that Jehovah will add fifteen years to his life.

In this miracle the world, turning from west to east at the rate of more than a thousand miles an hour, is not only stopped, but made to turn the other way until the shadow on the dial went back ten degrees! Is there in the whole world an intelligent man or woman who believes this impossible falsehood?

Jeremiah contains nothing of importance—no facts of value; nothing but fault-finding, lamentations,

croakings, wailings, curses and promises; nothing but famine and prayer, the prosperity of the wicked, the ruin of the Jews, the captivity and return, and at last Jeremiah, the traitor, in the stocks and in prison.

And Lamentations is simply a continuance of the ravings of the same insane pessimist; nothing but dust and sackcloth and ashes, tears and howls, railings and revilings.

And Ezekiel—eating manuscripts, prophesying siege and desolation, with visions of coals of fire, and cherubim, and wheels with eyes, and the type and figure of the boiling pot, and the resurrection of dry bones—is of no use, of no possible value.

With Voltaire, I say that any one who admires Ezekiel should be compelled to dine with him.

Daniel is a disordered dream—a nightmare.

What can be made of this book with its image with a golden head, with breast and arms of silver, with belly and thighs of brass, with legs of iron, and with feet of iron and clay; with its writing on the wall, its den of lions, and its vision of the ram and goat?

Is there anything to be learned from Hosea and his wife? Is there anything of use in Joel, in Amos, in Obadiah? Can we get any good from Jonah and

his gourd? Is it possible that God is the real author of Micah and Nahum, of Habakkuk and Zephaniah, of Haggai and Malachi and Zechariah, with his red horses, his four horns, his four carpenters, his flying roll, his mountains of brass and the stone with four eyes?

Is there anything in these "inspired" books that has been of benefit to man?

Have they taught us how to cultivate the earth, to build houses, to weave cloth, to prepare food? Have they taught us to paint pictures, to chisel statues, to build bridges, or ships, or anything of beauty or of use? Did we get our ideas of government, of religious freedom, of the liberty of thought, from the Old Testament? Did we get from any of these books a hint of any science? Is there in the "sacred volume" a word, a line, that has added to the wealth, the intelligence and the happiness of mankind? Is there one of the books of the Old Testament as entertaining as "Robinson Crusoe," "The Travels of Gulliver," or "Peter Wilkins and his Flying Wife"? Did the author of Genesis know as much about nature as Humboldt, or Darwin, or Haeckel? Is what is called the Mosaic Code as wise or as merciful as the code of any civilized nation? Were the writers of Kings and Chronicles as great historians,

as great writers, as Gibbon and Draper? Is Jeremiah or Habakkuk equal to Dickens or Thackeray? Can the authors of Job and the Psalms be compared with Shakespeare? Why should we attribute the best to man and the worst to God?

V.

WAS JEHOVAH A GOD OF LOVE?

DID these words come from the heart of love?—

"When the Lord thy God shall drive them before thee, thou shalt smite them and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, or show mercy unto them."

"I will heap mischief upon them. I will send mine arrows upon them; they shall be burned with hunger and devoured with burning heat and with bitter destruction."

"I will send the tooth of beasts upon them, with the poison of serpents of the dust."

"The sword without, and terror within, shall destroy both the young man and the virgin; the suckling also with the man of gray hairs."

"Let his children be fatherless and his wife a widow; let his children be continually vagabonds and beg; let them seek their bread also out of their desolate places; let the extortioner catch all that he hath, and let the stranger spoil his labor; let there be none to extend mercy unto him, neither let there be any to favor his fatherless children."

"And thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body—the flesh of thy sons and daughters."

"And the heaven that is over thee shall be brass, and the earth that is under thee shall be iron."

"Cursed shalt thou be in the city, and cursed shalt thou be in the field."

"I will make my arrows drunk with blood."

"I will laugh at their calamity."

Did these curses, these threats, come from the heart of love or from the mouth of savagery?

Was Jehovah god or devil?

Why should we place Jehovah above all the gods?

Has man in his ignorance and fear ever imagined a greater monster?

Have the barbarians of any land, in any time, worshiped a more heartless god?

Brahma was a thousand times nobler, and so was Osiris and Zeus and Jupiter. So was the supreme god of the Aztecs, to whom they offered only the perfume of flowers. The worst god of the Hindus, with his necklace of skulls and his bracelets of living snakes, was kind and merciful compared with Jehovah.

Compared with Marcus Aurelius, how small Jehovah seems. Compared with Abraham Lincoln, how cruel, how contemptible, is this god.

VI.

JEHOVAH'S ADMINISTRATION.

HE created the world, the hosts of heaven, a man and woman—placed them in a garden. Then the serpent deceived them, and they were cast out and made to earn their bread.

Jehovah had been thwarted.

Then he tried again. He went on for about sixteen hundred years trying to civilize the people.

No schools, no churches, no Bible, no tracts—nobody taught to read or write. No Ten Commandments. The people grew worse and worse, until the merciful Jehovah sent the flood and drowned all the people except Noah and his family, eight in all.

Then he started again, and changed their diet. At first Adam and Eve were vegetarians. After the flood Jehovah said: "Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you"—snakes and buzzards.

Then he failed again, and at the Tower of Babel he dispersed and scattered the people.

Finding that he could not succeed with all the people, he thought he would try a few, so he selected Abraham and his descendants. Again he failed, and

his chosen people were captured by the Egyptians and enslaved for four hundred years.

Then he tried again—rescued them from Pharaoh and started for Palestine.

Then he changed their diet, allowing them to eat only the beasts that parted the hoof and chewed the cud. Again he failed. The people hated him, and preferred the slavery of Egypt to the freedom of Jehovah. So he kept them wandering until nearly all who came from Egypt had died. Then he tried again—took them into Palestine and had them governed by judges.

This, too, was a failure—no schools, no Bible. Then he tried kings, and the kings were mostly idolaters.

Then the chosen people were conquered and carried into captivity by the Babylonians.

Another failure.

Then they returned, and Jehovah tried prophets—howlers and wailers—but the people grew worse and worse. No schools, no sciences, no arts, no commerce. Then Jehovah took upon himself flesh, was born of a woman, and lived among the people that he had been trying to civilize for several thousand years. Then these people, following the law that Jehovah had given them in the wilderness, charged

this Jehovah-man—this Christ—with blasphemy; tried, convicted and killed him.

Jehovah had failed again.

Then he deserted the Jews and turned his attention to the rest of the world.

And now the Jews, deserted by Jehovah, persecuted by Christians, are the most prosperous people on the earth. Again has Jehovah failed.

What an administration!

VII.

THE NEW TESTAMENT.

WHO wrote the New Testament?

Christian scholars admit that they do not know. They admit that, if the four gospels were written by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, they must have been written in Hebrew. And yet a Hebrew manuscript of any one of these gospels has never been found. All have been and are in Greek. So, educated theologians admit that the Epistles, James and Jude, were written by persons who had never seen one of the four gospels. In these Epistles—in James and Jude—no reference is made to any of the gospels, nor to any miracle recorded in them.

The first mention that has been found of one of our gospels was made about one hundred and eighty years after the birth of Christ, and the four gospels were first named and quoted from at the beginning of the third century, about one hundred and seventy years after the death of Christ.

We now know that there were many other gospels besides our four, some of which have been lost. There were the gospels of Paul, of the Egyptians, of

the Hebrews, of Perfection, of Judas, of Thaddeus, of the Infancy, of Thomas, of Mary, of Andrew, of Nicodemus, of Marcion and several others.

So there were the Acts of Pilate, of Andrew, of Mary, of Paul and Thecla and of many others; also a book called the Shepherd of Hermas.

At first not one of all the books was considered as inspired. The Old Testament was regarded as divine; but the books that now constitute the New Testament were regarded as human productions. We now know that we do not know who wrote the four gospels.

The question is, Were the authors of these four gospels inspired?

If they were inspired, then the four gospels must be true. If they are true, they must agree.

The four gospels do not agree.

Matthew, Mark and Luke knew nothing of the atonement, nothing of salvation by faith. They knew only the gospel of good deeds—of charity. They teach that if we forgive others God will forgive us.

With this the gospel of John does not agree.

In that gospel we are taught that we must believe on the Lord Jesus Christ; that we must be born again; that we must drink the blood and eat the flesh of Christ. In this gospel we find the doctrine of the

atonement and that Christ died for us and suffered in our place.

This gospel is utterly at variance with the other three. If the other three are true, the gospel of John is false. If the gospel of John was written by an inspired man, the writers of the other three were uninspired. From this there is no possible escape. The four cannot be true.

It is evident that there are many interpolations in the four gospels.

For instance, in the 28th chapter of Matthew is an account to the effect that the soldiers at the tomb of Christ were bribed to say that the disciples of Jesus stole away his body while they, the soldiers, slept.

This is clearly an interpolation. It is a break in the narrative.

The 10th verse should be followed by the 16th. The 10th verse is as follows:

"Then Jesus said unto them, 'Be not afraid; go tell my brethren that they go unto Galilee and there shall they see me.'"

The 16th verse:

"Then the eleven disciples went away unto Galilee into a mountain, where Jesus had appointed them."

The story about the soldiers contained in the 11th,

12th, 13th, 14th and 15th verses is an interpolation —an afterthought—long after. The 15th verse demonstrates this.

Fifteenth verse: "So they took the money and did as they were taught. And this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day."

Certainly this account was not in the original gospel, and certainly the 15th verse was not written by a Jew. No Jew could have written this: "And this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day."

Mark, John and Luke never heard that the soldiers had been bribed by the priests; or, if they had, did not think it worth while recording. So the accounts of the Ascension of Jesus Christ in Mark and Luke are interpolations. Matthew says nothing about the Ascension.

Certainly there never was a greater miracle, and yet Matthew, who was present—who saw the Lord rise, ascend and disappear—did not think it worth mentioning.

On the other hand, the last words of Christ, according to Matthew, contradict the Ascension: "Lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

John, who was present, if Christ really ascended, says not one word on the subject.

As to the Ascension, the gospels do not agree.

Mark gives the last conversation that Christ had with his disciples, as follows:

"Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe: In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues. They shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover. So, then, after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven and sat on the right hand of God."

Is it possible that this description was written by one who witnessed this miracle?

This miracle is described by Luke as follows: "And it came to pass while he blessed them he was parted from them and carried up into heaven."

"Brevity is the soul of wit."

In the Acts we are told that: "When he had spoken, while they beheld, he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight."

Neither Luke, nor Matthew, nor John, nor the writer of the Acts, heard one word of the conversation attributed to Christ by Mark. The fact is that the

Ascension of Christ was not claimed by his disciples.

At first Christ was a man—nothing more. Mary was his mother, Joseph his father. The genealogy of his father, Joseph, was given to show that he was of the blood of David.

Then the claim was made that he was the son of God, and that his mother was a virgin, and that she remained a virgin until her death.

Then the claim was made that Christ rose from the dead and ascended bodily to heaven.

It required many years for these absurdities to take possession of the minds of men.

If Christ rose from the dead, why did he not appear to his enemies? Why did he not call on Caiaphas, the high priest? Why did he not make another triumphal entry into Jerusalem?

If he really ascended, why did he not do so in public, in the presence of his persecutors? Why should this, the greatest of miracles, be done in secret, in a corner?

It was a miracle that could have been seen by a vast multitude—a miracle that could not be simulated—one that would have convinced hundreds of thousands.

After the story of the Resurrection, the Ascension became a necessity. They had to dispose of the body.

So there are many other interpolations in the gospels and epistles.

Again I ask: Is the New Testament true? Does anybody now believe that at the birth of Christ there was a celestial greeting; that a star led the Wise Men of the East; that Herod slew the babes of Bethlehem of two years old and under?

The gospels are filled with accounts of miracles. Were they ever performed?

Matthew gives the particulars of about twenty-two miracles, Mark of about nineteen, Luke of about eighteen and John of about seven.

According to the gospels, Christ healed diseases, cast out devils, rebuked the sea, cured the blind, fed multitudes with five loaves and two fishes, walked on the sea, cursed a fig tree, turned water into wine and raised the dead.

Matthew is the only one that tells about the Star and the Wise Men—the only one that tells about the murder of babes.

John is the only one who says anything about the resurrection of Lazarus, and Luke is the only one giving an account of the raising from the dead the widow of Nain's son.

How is it possible to substantiate these miracles? The Jews, among whom they were said to have

been performed, did not believe them. The diseased, the palsied, the leprous, the blind who were cured, did not become followers of Christ. Those that were raised from the dead were never heard of again.

Does any intelligent man believe in the existence of devils? The writer of three of the gospels certainly did. John says nothing about Christ having cast out devils, but Matthew, Mark and Luke give many instances.

Does any natural man now believe that Christ cast out devils? If his disciples said he did, they were mistaken. If Christ said he did, he was insane or an impostor.

If the accounts of casting out devils are false, then the writers were ignorant or dishonest. If they wrote through ignorance, then they were not inspired. If they wrote what they knew to be false, they were not inspired. If what they wrote is untrue, whether they knew it or not, they were not inspired.

At that time it was believed that palsy, epilepsy, deafness, insanity and many other diseases were caused by devils; that devils took possession of and lived in the bodies of men and women. Christ believed this, taught this belief to others, and pretended to cure diseases by casting devils out of the sick and insane. We know now, if we know anything, that

diseases are not caused by the presence of devils. We know, if we know anything, that devils do not reside in the bodies of men.

If Christ said and did what the writers of the three gospels say he said and did, then Christ was mistaken. If he was mistaken, certainly he was not God. And if he was mistaken, certainly he was not inspired.

Is it a fact that the Devil tried to bribe Christ?

Is it a fact that the Devil carried Christ to the top of the temple and tried to induce him to leap to the ground?

How can these miracles be established?

The principals have written nothing, Christ has written nothing, and the Devil has remained silent.

How can we know that the Devil tried to bribe Christ? Who wrote the account? We do not know. How did the writer get his information? We do not know.

Somebody, some seventeen hundred years ago, said that the Devil tried to bribe God; that the Devil carried God to the top of the temple and tried to induce him to leap to the earth and that God was intellectually too keen for the Devil.

This is all the evidence we have.

Is there anything in the literature of the world more perfectly idiotic?

Intelligent people no longer believe in witches, wizards, spooks and devils, and they are perfectly satisfied that every word in the New Testament about casting out devils is utterly false.

Can we believe that Christ raised the dead?

A widow living in Nain is following the body of her son to the tomb. Christ halts the funeral procession and raises the young man from the dead and gives him back to the arms of his mother.

This young man disappears. He is never heard of again. No one takes the slightest interest in the man who returned from the realm of death. Luke is the only one who tells the story. Maybe Matthew, Mark and John never heard of it, or did not believe it and so failed to record it.

John says that Lazarus was raised from the dead; Matthew, Mark and Luke say nothing about it.

It was more wonderful than the raising of the widow's son. He had not been laid in the tomb for days. He was only on his way to the grave, but Lazarus was actually dead. He had begun to decay.

Lazarus did not excite the least interest. No one asked him about the other world. No one inquired of him about their dead friends.

When he died the second time no one said: "He is not afraid. He has traveled that road twice and knows just where he is going."

We do not believe in the miracles of Mohammed, and yet they are as well attested as this. We have no confidence in the miracles performed by Joseph Smith, and yet the evidence is far greater, far better.

If a man should go about now pretending to raise the dead, pretending to cast out devils, we would regard him as insane. What, then, can we say of Christ? If we wish to save his reputation we are compelled to say that he never pretended to raise the dead; that he never claimed to have cast out devils.

We must take the ground that these ignorant and impossible things were invented by zealous disciples, who sought to deify their leader.

In those ignorant days these falsehoods added to the fame of Christ. But now they put his character in peril and belittle the authors of the gospels.

Can we now believe that water was changed into wine? John tells of this childish miracle, and says that the other disciples were present, yet Matthew, Mark and Luke say nothing about it.

Take the miracle of the man cured by the pool of Bethseda. John says that an angel troubled the waters of the pool of Bethseda, and that whoever got

into the pool first after the waters were troubled was healed.

Does anybody now believe that an angel went into the pool and troubled the waters? Does anybody now think that the poor wretch who got in first was healed? Yet the author of the gospel according to John believed and asserted these absurdities. If he was mistaken about that he may have been about all the miracles he records.

John is the only one who tells about this pool of Bethseda. Possibly the other disciples did not believe the story.

How can we account for these pretended miracles?

In the days of the disciples, and for many centuries after, the world was filled with the supernatural. Nearly everything that happened was regarded as miraculous. God was the immediate governor of the world. If the people were good, God sent seed time and harvest; but if they were bad he sent flood and hail, frost and famine. If anything wonderful happened it was exaggerated until it became a miracle.

Of the order of events—of the unbroken and the unbreakable chain of causes and effects—the people had no knowledge and no thought.

A miracle is the badge and brand of fraud. No miracle ever was performed. No intelligent, honest

man ever pretended to perform a miracle, and never will.

If Christ had wrought the miracles attributed to him; if he had cured the palsied and insane; if he had given hearing to the deaf, vision to the blind; if he had cleansed the leper with a word, and with a touch had given life and feeling to the withered limb; if he had given pulse and motion, warmth and thought, to cold and breathless clay; if he had conquered death and rescued from the grave its pallid prey—no word would have been uttered, no hand raised, except in praise and honor. In his presence all heads would have been uncovered—all knees upon the ground.

Is it not strange that at the trial of Christ no one was found to say a word in his favor? No man stood forth and said: "I was a leper, and this man cured me with a touch." No woman said: "I am the widow of Nain and this is my son whom this man raised from the dead."

No man said: "I was blind, and this man gave me sight."

All silent.

VIII.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF CHRIST.

MILLIONS assert that the philosophy of Christ is perfect—that he was the wisest that ever uttered speech.

Let us see :

Resist not evil. If smitten on one cheek turn the other.

Is there any philosophy, any wisdom in this? Christ takes from goodness, from virtue, from the truth, the right of self-defence. Vice becomes the master of the world, and the good become the victims of the infamous.

No man has the right to protect himself, his property, his wife and children. Government becomes impossible, and the world is at the mercy of criminals. Is there any absurdity beyond this?

Love your enemies.

Is this possible? Did any human being ever love his enemies? Did Christ love his, when he denounced them as whited sepulchers, hypocrites and vipers?

We cannot love those who hate us. Hatred in the

hearts of others does not breed love in ours. Not to resist evil is absurd; to love your enemies is impossible.

Take no thought for the morrow.

The idea was that God would take care of us as he did of sparrows and lilies. Is there the least sense in that belief?

Does God take care of anybody?

Can we live without taking thought for the morrow? To plow, to sow, to cultivate, to harvest, is to take thought for the morrow. We plan and work for the future, for our children, for the unborn generations to come. Without this forethought there could be no progress, no civilization. The world would go back to the caves and dens of savagery.

If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out. If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off.

Why? Because it is better that one of our members should perish than that the whole body should be cast into hell.

Is there any wisdom in putting out your eyes or cutting off your hands? Is it possible to extract from these extravagant sayings the smallest grain of common sense?

Swear not at all; neither by Heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the Earth, for it is his footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is his holy city.

Here we find the astronomy and geology of Christ. Heaven is the throne of God, the monarch; the earth is his footstool. A footstool that turns over at the rate of a thousand miles an hour, and sweeps through space at the rate of over a thousand miles a minute!

Where did Christ think heaven was? Why was Jerusalem a holy city? Was it because the inhabitants were ignorant, cruel and superstitious?

If any man will sue thee at the law and take away thy coat let him have thy cloak also.

Is there any philosophy, any good sense, in that commandment? Would it not be just as sensible to say: "If a man obtains a judgment against you for one hundred dollars, give him two hundred."

Only the insane could give or follow this advice.

Think not I am come to send peace on earth. I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother.

If this is true, how much better it would have been had he remained away.

Is it possible that he who said, "Resist not evil," came to bring a sword? That he who said, "Love your enemies," came to destroy the peace of the world?

To set father against son, and daughter against father—what a glorious mission!

He did bring a sword, and the sword was wet for a thousand years with innocent blood. In millions of hearts he sowed the seeds of hatred and revenge. He divided nations and families, put out the light of reason, and petrified the hearts of men.

And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.

According to the writer of Matthew, Christ, the compassionate, the merciful, uttered these terrible words. Is it possible that Christ offered the bribe of eternal joy to those who would desert their fathers, their mothers, their wives and children? Are we to win the happiness of heaven by deserting the ones we love? Is a home to be ruined here for the sake of a mansion there?

And yet it is said that Christ is an example for all the world. Did he desert his father and mother? He said, speaking to his mother: "Woman, what have I to do with thee?"

The Pharisees said unto Christ: "Is it lawful to pay tribute unto Cæsar?

Christ said: "Show me the tribute money." They brought him a penny. And he saith unto them: "Whose is the image and the superscription?" They

said: "Cæsar's." And Christ said: "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's."

Did Christ think that the money belonged to Cæsar because his image and superscription were stamped upon it? Did the penny belong to Cæsar or to the man who had earned it? Had Cæsar the right to demand it because it was adorned with his image?

Does it appear from this conversation that Christ understood the real nature and use of money?

Can we now say that Christ was the greatest of philosophers?

IX.

IS CHRIST OUR EXAMPLE?

HE never said a word in favor of education. He never even hinted at the existence of any science. He never uttered a word in favor of industry, economy or of any effort to better our condition in this world. He was the enemy of the successful, of the wealthy. Dives was sent to hell, not because he was bad, but because he was rich. Lazarus went to heaven, not because he was good, but because he was poor.

Christ cared nothing for painting, for sculpture, for music—nothing for any art. He said nothing about the duties of nation to nation, of king to subject; nothing about the rights of man; nothing about intellectual liberty or the freedom of speech. He said nothing about the sacredness of home; not one word for the fireside; not a word in favor of marriage, in honor of maternity.

He never married. He wandered homeless from place to place with a few disciples. None of them seem to have been engaged in any useful business, and they seem to have lived on alms.

All human ties were held in contempt; this world

was sacrificed for the next; all human effort was discouraged. God would support and protect.

At last, in the dusk of death, Christ, finding that he was mistaken, cried out: "My God! My God! Why hast thou forsaken me?"

We have found that man must depend on himself. He must clear the land; he must build the home; he must plow and plant; he must invent; he must work with hand and brain; he must overcome the difficulties and obstructions; he must conquer and enslave the forces of nature to the end that they may do the work of the world.

X.

WHY SHOULD WE PLACE CHRIST AT THE TOP AND SUMMIT OF THE HUMAN RACE?

WAS he kinder, more forgiving, more self-sacrificing than Buddha? Was he wiser, did he meet death with more perfect calmness, than Socrates? Was he more patient, more charitable, than Epictetus? Was he a greater philosopher, a deeper thinker, than Epicurus? In what respect was he the superior of Zoroaster? Was he gentler than Lao-tsze, more universal than Confucius? Were his ideas of human rights and duties superior to those of Zeno? Did he express grander truths than Cicero? Was his mind subtler than Spinoza's? Was his brain equal to Kepler's or Newton's? Was he grander in death—a sublimer martyr than Bruno? Was he in intelligence, in the force and beauty of expression, in breadth and scope of thought, in wealth of illustration, in aptness of comparison, in knowledge of the human brain and heart, of all passions, hopes and fears, the equal of Shakespeare, the greatest of the human race?

If Christ was in fact God, he knew all the future.

Before him like a panorama moved the history yet to be. He knew how his words would be interpreted. He knew what crimes, what horrors, what infamies, would be committed in his name. He knew that the hungry flames of persecution would climb around the limbs of countless martyrs. He knew that thousands and thousands of brave men and women would languish in dungeons in darkness, filled with pain. He knew that his church would invent and use instruments of torture; that his followers would appeal to whip and fagot, to chain and rack. He saw the horizon of the future lurid with the flames of the *auto da fe*. He knew what creeds would spring like poisonous fungi from every text. He saw the ignorant sects waging war against each other. He saw thousands of men, under the orders of priests, building prisons for their fellow-men. He saw thousands of scaffolds dripping with the best and bravest blood. He saw his followers using the instruments of pain. He heard the groans—saw the faces white with agony. He heard the shrieks and sobs and cries of all the moaning, martyred multitudes. He knew that commentaries would be written on his words with swords, to be read by the light of fagots. He knew that the Inquisition would be born of the teachings attributed to him.

He saw the interpolations and falsehoods that hypocrisy would write and tell. He saw all wars that would be waged, and he knew that above these fields of death, these dungeons, these rackings, these burnings, these executions, for a thousand years would float the dripping banner of the cross.

He knew that hypocrisy would be robed and crowned—that cruelty and credulity would rule the world; knew that liberty would perish from the earth; knew that popes and kings in his name would enslave the souls and bodies of men; knew that they would persecute and destroy the discoverers, thinkers and inventors; knew that his church would extinguish reason's holy light and leave the world without a star.

He saw his disciples extinguishing the eyes of men, flaying them alive, cutting out their tongues, searching for all the nerves of pain.

He knew that in his name his followers would trade in human flesh; that cradles would be robbed and women's breasts unbabed for gold.

And yet he died with voiceless lips.

Why did he fail to speak? Why did he not tell his disciples, and through them the world: "You shall not burn, imprison and torture in my name. You shall not persecute your fellow-men."

Why did he not plainly say: "I am the Son of God," or, "I am God"? Why did he not explain the Trinity? Why did he not tell the mode of baptism that was pleasing to him? Why did he not write a creed? Why did he not break the chains of slaves? Why did he not say that the Old Testament was or was not the inspired word of God? Why did he not write the New Testament himself? Why did he leave his words to ignorance, hypocrisy and chance? Why did he not say something positive, definite and satisfactory about another world? Why did he not turn the tear-stained hope of heaven into the glad knowledge of another life? Why did he not tell us something of the rights of man, of the liberty of hand and brain?

Why did he go dumbly to his death, leaving the world to misery and to doubt?

I will tell you why. He was a man, and did not know.

XI.

INSPIRATION.

NOT before about the third century was it claimed or believed that the books composing the New Testament were inspired.

It will be remembered that there were a great number of books, of Gospels, Epistles and Acts, and that from these the "inspired" ones were selected by "uninspired" men.

Between the "Fathers" there were great differences of opinion as to which books were inspired; much discussion and plenty of hatred. Many of the books now deemed spurious were by many of the "Fathers" regarded as divine, and some now regarded as inspired were believed to be spurious. Many of the early Christians and some of the "Fathers" repudiated the Gospel of John, the Epistle to the Hebrews, Jude, James, Peter, and the Revelation of St. John. On the other hand, many of them regarded the Gospel of the Hebrews, of the Egyptians, the Preaching of Peter, the Shepherd of Hermas, the Epistle of Barnabas, the Pastor of Hermas, the Revelation of Peter, the Revelation of Paul, the Epistle of Clement, the

Gospel of Nicodemus, inspired books, equal to the very best.

From all these books, and many others, the Christians selected the inspired ones.

The men who did the selecting were ignorant and superstitious. They were firm believers in the miraculous. They thought that diseases had been cured by the aprons and handkerchiefs of the apostles, by the bones of the dead. They believed in the fable of the Phœnix, and that the hyenas changed their sex every year.

Were the men who through many centuries made the selections inspired? Were they—ignorant, credulous, stupid and malicious—as well qualified to judge of "inspiration" as the students of our time? How are we bound by their opinion? Have we not the right to judge for ourselves?

Erasmus, one of the leaders of the Reformation, declared that the Epistle to the Hebrews was not written by Paul, and he denied the inspiration of Second and Third John, and also of Revelation. Luther was of the same opinion. He declared James to be an epistle of straw, and denied the inspiration of Revelation. Zwinglius rejected the book of Revelation, and even Calvin denied that Paul was the author of Hebrews.

The truth is that the Protestants did not agree as to what books are inspired until 1647, by the Assembly of Westminster.

To prove that a book is inspired you must prove the existence of God. You must also prove that this God thinks, acts, has objects, ends and aims. This is somewhat difficult.

It is impossible to conceive of an infinite being. Having no conception of an infinite being, it is impossible to tell whether all the facts we know tend to prove or disprove the existence of such a being.

God is a guess. If the existence of God is admitted, how are we to prove that he inspired the writers of the books of the Bible?

How can one man establish the inspiration of another? How can an inspired man prove that he is inspired? How can he know himself that he is inspired? There is no way to prove the fact of inspiration. The only evidence is the word of some man who could by no possibility know anything on the subject.

What is inspiration? Did God use men as instruments? Did he cause them to write his thoughts? Did he take possession of their minds and destroy their wills?

Were these writers only partly controlled, so that their mistakes, their ignorance and their prejudices were mingled with the wisdom of God?

How are we to separate the mistakes of man from the thoughts of God? Can we do this without being inspired ourselves? If the original writers were inspired, then the translators should have been, and so should be the men who tell us what the Bible means.

How is it possible for a human being to know that he is inspired by an infinite being? But of one thing we may be certain: An inspired book should certainly excel all the books produced by uninspired men. It should, above all, be true, filled with wisdom, blossoming in beauty—perfect.

Ministers wonder how I can be wicked enough to attack the Bible.

I will tell them:

This book, the Bible, has persecuted, even unto death, the wisest and the best. This book stayed and stopped the onward movement of the human race. This book poisoned the fountains of learning and misdirected the energies of man.

This book is the enemy of freedom, the support of slavery. This book sowed the seeds of hatred in

families and nations, fed the flames of war, and impoverished the world. This book is the breastwork of kings and tyrants—the enslaver of women and children. This book has corrupted parliaments and courts. This book has made colleges and universities the teachers of error and the haters of science. This book has filled Christendom with hateful, cruel, ignorant and warring sects. This book taught men to kill their fellows for religion's sake. This book founded the Inquisition, invented the instruments of torture, built the dungeons in which the good and loving languished, forged the chains that rusted in their flesh, erected the scaffolds whereon they died. This book piled fagots about the feet of the just. This book drove reason from the minds of millions and filled the asylums with the insane.

This book has caused fathers and mothers to shed the blood of their babes. This book was the auction block on which the slave-mother stood when she was sold from her child. This book filled the sails of the slave-trader and made merchandise of human flesh. This book lighted the fires that burned "witches" and "wizards." This book filled the darkness with ghouls and ghosts, and the bodies of men and women with devils. This book polluted the souls of men with the infamous dogma of eternal

pain. This book made credulity the greatest of virtues, and investigation the greatest of crimes. This book filled nations with hermits, monks and nuns—with the pious and the useless. This book placed the ignorant and unclean saint above the philosopher and philanthropist. This book taught man to despise the joys of this life, that he might be happy in another—to waste this world for the sake of the next.

I attack this book because it is the enemy of human liberty—the greatest obstruction across the highway of human progress.

Let me ask the ministers one question: How can you be wicked enough to defend this book?

XII.

THE REAL BIBLE.

FOR thousands of years men have been writing the real Bible, and it is being written from day to day, and it will never be finished while man has life. All the facts that we know, all the truly recorded events, all the discoveries and inventions, all the wonderful machines whose wheels and levers seem to think, all the poems, crystals from the brain, flowers from the heart, all the songs of love and joy, of smiles and tears, the great dramas of Imagination's world, the wondrous paintings, miracles of form and color, of light and shade, the marvelous marbles that seem to live and breathe, the secrets told by rock and star, by dust and flower, by rain and snow, by frost and flame, by winding stream and desert sand, by mountain range and billowed sea.

All the wisdom that lengthens and ennobles life—all that avoids or cures disease, or conquers pain—all just and perfect laws and rules that guide and shape our lives, all thoughts that feed the flames of love, the music that transfigures, enraptures and enthralls, the victories of heart and brain, the miracles that

hands have wrought, the deft and cunning hands of those who worked for wife and child, the histories of noble deeds, of brave and useful men, of faithful loving wives, of quenchless mother-love, of conflicts for the right, of sufferings for the truth, of all the best that all the men and women of the world have said, and thought and done through all the years.

These treasures of the heart and brain—these are the Sacred Scriptures of the human race.

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